This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

33 07606173 2

CHARLES VINCENT;

OR,

THE TWO CLERKS.

A TALE OF COMMERCIAL LIFE.

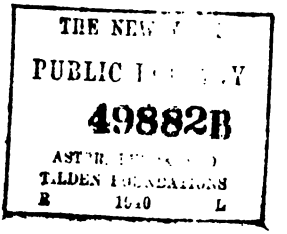
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

NEW-YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF-STREET.

1839.


THE NEW
PUBLIC
49882B
ASTOR
TILDEN
R 1940 L

Entered, according to act of Congress, in the year 1839,
By Harper & Brothers,
in the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New-York.

CHARLES VINCENT;

OR,

THE TWO CLERKS.

CHAPTER I.

At the appointed hour, Vincent repaired to the counting-room, where he found Mr. Wilmot and his partner. Brown was not there, but he had requested Mr. Wray to say that an unavoidable engagement would prevent his being present. Mr. Wilmot regretted his absence, and, having requested Vincent to be seated, stated to him the object of the interview.

"I did not inform you, Charles," said he, "why I was under the necessity of leaving Saratoga so much sooner than we had expected; nor did I then apprehend it would become my painful duty to make it known to you, that your name is connected with the transaction which was the immediate cause of our return. Without multiplying words unnecessarily, I may as well come directly to the point and say, that about ten days since, a forgery of a draft purporting to be ours, on the —— Bank, for twenty-five hundred dollars, was

committed, and that you are suspected by Mr. Wray of being the individual who perpetrated the fraud."

"I! did you say?" exclaimed Vincent, thunderstruck by this astounding news; "good God! on what grounds is so heinous a crime imputed to me? It is false, Mr. Wilmot; I am not guilty of the deed—"

Here Vincent burst into tears, and was unable to proceed; while Mr. Wilmot, moved by this sudden exhibition of mental anguish, and scarcely able to preserve command over his own feelings, embraced this opportunity to mention the circumstances upon which the suspicion was founded.

"The most material portion of the evidence against you," continued he, after briefly rehearsing all the facts in the case, "is this letter, which was found in your private desk, and which, in the opinion of Mr. Wray, shows that you had been much in want of a large sum of money, and that, consequently, an adequate motive existed for committing the crime. Another letter, purporting to be an answer, though unsigned by you, appears to be in your handwriting."

"Let me see it, if you please," said Vincent, hastily starting from his seat, and seizing the paper with a hand tremulous from the excited state of his nerves; "I call God to witness my declaration," added he, in a calm and subdued tone, after running his eye over the page, "that not a letter of this was written by me. I never, till this moment,

saw any of the papers you have referred to, nor did I even know of their existence till I saw them in your hands."

"I wish you to understand, Vincent," said Mr. Wilmot, more than ever confirmed in the belief of the young man's innocence, "that I am not your accuser, and that I am now only examining you in reference to circumstances (discovered chiefly by Mr. Wray) which, to be candid, are well calculated to excite suspicion, whether you be innocent or guilty. This writing certainly bears a strong resemblance to yours; and I must confess, that were I called into a court of justice to give an opinion, I could almost swear that this letter was written by you. Mr. Wray has no doubt of it, but I sincerely hope that he may be mistaken."

"Mr. Wray ought to be familiar with my handwriting," said Vincent, "and doubtless can distinguish it from most others; but in this case I solemnly aver that he is deceived, for I did not, I repeat, write a word of that letter. I acknowledge the similarity; and, had I seen the same on a subject of business in one of our books, I might, without a close examination, have claimed it as my own. As it is impossible for me to prove a negative, I can do no more than disclaim any knowledge of these documents. I am not more responsible than is Mr. Brown for whatever may be found in a desk used in common by both him and me; and if there be anything suspicious about the sheet of paper you therein discovered, why am I alone held ac-

countable? You say that I was suspected before my private desk was searched. Why, allow me to ask, was this? and why did Brown, who has long had daily access to the same place, escape your suspicion? I declare before Heaven, that on the day preceding our departure, neither of these letters was in my private desk; for at that time I took out everything it contained and cleaned it, and after I replaced my papers and other articles, did not even see it again till this morning."

"I hope what you say may be true," said Mr. Wray, with an incredulous smile; "yet the circumstantial evidence against you is of too strong a character to admit of our being satisfied with your simple declaration of entire innocence. Since we have gone so far, with a result anything but favourable to you, it is proper that we should make a thorough search among your effects, with a view to discover something that may operate for or against you in this matter. Have you any objection?"

"None whatever," replied Vincent; "you may commence immediately. My trunks, drawers, desk, &c., are subject to your inspection. There is my pocket-book; examine it, if you please."

"How much money does it contain?" asked Mr. Wray, proceeding to undo the clasp.

"Forty dollars," replied Vincent. "Before leaving the city on our northern tour, I drew fifty of my own money from Mr. Wilmot; and as he did me the favour to pay my expenses, I have had occasion

to spend but ten, consequently forty remain; and that sum only you will find in one of the pockets."

"One hundred and forty, perhaps, you mean," said Mr. Wray, who, although not inimical to Vincent, was nevertheless glad to discover another circumstance tending to support the accusation he had made.

"Good God!" exclaimed Mr. Wilmot, "can it be possible."

"What say you to this, Mr. Vincent?" asked Mr. Wray, with a sarcastic smile and an air of triumph; "here are the forty dollars you spoke of; but you said nothing of this one hundred-dollar bill, which I found tucked away in the innermost recess of your pocket-book. Has this wallet been constantly in your possession during the last fortnight?"

"I am not aware," replied Vincent, utterly confounded by this new discovery, "that any person but myself has, within that period, touched it."

"Then you ought to be able to explain," said Mr. Wray, "how this bill came into your possession. It is, beyond question, one of the five of the same amount that were drawn from the —— Bank with the forged check. One having been found in your private desk, and another in a pocket-book which you admit has been carried about with you for a length of time, how can we resist the conclusion that you drew, or procured them to be drawn, from the bank?"

"As true as there is a God in Heaven," said Vincent, "I never saw that bill till now. Whence

it came, or how it got into my pocket-book, is more than I can tell. But it is needless for me to say more; for I have nothing to oppose to these mysterious circumstances, but my simple denial of having committed, or been privy to, the forgery of which I am accused; and a character for honesty and integrity which, till the present hour, has been without a blemish. I see you are convinced that I am guilty, and I could not alter your opinion with the slight defence it is in my power to make."

A silence of some minutes ensued. Charles sat the very image of despair, and Mr. Wilmot regarded him with strong emotions of pity, mingled with sorrow, for the unfortunate predicament in which Vincent now found himself. Mr. Wilmot was a man of strong and generous feeling, and remarkable for the interest he almost invariably manifested in the welfare of those whom he employed. Vincent, as we have before remarked, had always been a favourite with him; indeed, there was no person connected with the house who stood higher in his estimation; and this partiality had much increased since the day on which he rescued Clara from her perilous situation. It was not without much pain, therefore, that he saw Vincent accused of a great crime, and the accusation supported by evidence of such a character as would procure his arrest, if the police were in possession of all the facts.

Mr. Wray, having, as he flattered himself, established Vincent's guilt, took his departure, leav-

ing his partner to adopt such a course as he might deem necessary and proper. This man, though he had taken much pains to fasten the crime upon Vincent, had done no more than his duty required; and when, as he thought, his efforts had been crowned with success, his natural tenderness of feeling reproached him for having laboured so perseveringly to effect the ruin of a valuable clerk. On his way home he admitted to himself, for the first time, the possibility of Vincent's being innocent of the forgery; and the more he reflected upon the young man's previous good character, the amiableness of his disposition, and his uniformly exemplary conduct, the more anxious he became to repair, so far as he might be able, the damage he had done. The conscious purity of his motives did not console him; and so unhappy did he feel, that, before he had been home ten minutes, he seized his hat and walked back to the counting-room, with a view of expressing his strong doubts as to the correctness of his former conclusions, and suggesting the propriety of shielding Vincent from disgrace and punishment. On his arrival there, however, he found that Mr. Wilmot and Vincent were gone.

When the accused was alone with his employer and friend, he again solemnly averred that he was guiltless of the deed imputed to him by the junior partner; and remarked that, next to the loss of character he must sustain, he should regard his approaching separation from a man he so highly re-

spected as the most serious consequence of his sudden though unmerited fall.

"Whatever Mr. Wray may think," said Mr. Wilmot, "I am free to confess a disposition to believe you innocent, although the circumstances that have come to light, might lead one unacquainted with your habits and character, to draw a different conclusion. You have now been several years in my service, during which time I have ever found you attentive, punctual, and industrious; and on no occasion have I known you to be long absent from the office (except when indisposed or on business) without having first asked and obtained leave. I have often been told, too, that your evenings are, for the most part, spent in study at home; and that it is a rare thing for you to visit the theatre, a place too frequently resorted to by young men of your class. If my observations have not misled me, and the information I have from time to time received concerning you be correct, your conduct, hitherto, has been irreproachable; and I therefore look upon it as improbable, not to say impossible, that you should now commence the opposite course by the commission of a great crime. Men do not suddenly leap from virtue to the depths of vice; it is by slow degrees that they abandon the path of rectitude; and they become capable of perpetrating moral offences of the worst character, only after a long familiarity with every grade of iniquity.

"I have already decided," continued he, "to

throw myself between you and the danger to which you are exposed. The officers of the bank, I will answer for it, have no desire to proceed to extremities; and if they can recover the money of which they have been defrauded, I think that, at my request, they will consent to remain silent. They are particular friends of mine; added to which, I am a director of the institution, and one whose account is of no small value to the bank; consequently, my influence will be sufficient to protect you, if it be backed, as I intend it shall, by a restoration, out of my own purse, of every farthing. After doing this, I shall still consider myself under great obligations to you for your noble and successful exertions to save the life of my only child."

"I thank you," said Vincent, his voice trembling and his eyes filling with tears; "and I would to God that you could know the depth of my gratitude for this new instance of your goodness, and for the great kindness I have ever experienced at your hands. I would at this moment lay down my life for the power to show you that your confidence in me was not misplaced, and that your belief in my innocence does me no more than common justice. Depend upon it, sir, that, to the last hour of my life, I shall never cease to cherish the recollection of the numerous proofs of your generosity that I have received, since the day that I had the good fortune to attract your notice.

"After having served your house for several years—I hope to your entire satisfaction—the ne-

cessity of leaving you under these circumstances is indeed painful to me; but I shall derive much consolation from the assurance, on your part, that I am not regarded by you as one who repaid the most disinterested kindness with the basest ingratitude."

"So far as I am concerned, Vincent," said Mr. Wilmot, "it would give me pleasure to retain you in my employ; but, inasmuch as my partner thinks differently of this unfortunate business, I ought not, perhaps, to insist on your remaining with us. After what has passed, my own opinion is, that you would best consult your own happiness by obtaining another situation."

"That is my only course. There is one request that I have to make, which is, that you will pay to the —— Bank the balance of money in your hands belonging to me. If my account be correct, you have now the sum of five hundred dollars; and my last quarter's salary is due from the house, which will make little more than six hundred dollars to be so applied."

"To this, Charles, I beg leave to object," said Mr. Wilmot. "The money I hold shall be paid to you, and that which is to go to the bank I will furnish. It will give me pleasure thus to put you out of harm's way. The sum is but a trifle; and, were it quadruple the size, I could pay it with as little inconvenience as the loss of a shilling would occasion. Leave this matter to me."

"I cannot consent that so much money should be paid by you to extricate me from difficulty, while

it is in my power to contribute one fourth of the requisite amount. Perhaps I ought to object to your paying anything; but I certainly must insist that your debt to me shall now be considered as cancelled. My future earnings shall be devoted to the reimbursement of whatever sum you may have the goodness to advance for me."

"You will not allow me, then, to make a slight return for the important service you have rendered me and my family?"

"The service to which you allude was rendered long after I had cause of gratitude to you for the signal benefits you had conferred upon me."

"Well, Vincent," said Mr. Wilmot, rising and taking his hat, "you must this time allow me to have my own way. If you will not accept your dues now, I shall hold them subject to your order. Bear this in mind, if you please; and remember, too, that whithersoever you may go, and in whatsoever situation you may be placed, you have in me a firm and steady friend. Do not hesitate to call upon me whenever you may stand in need of advice and assistance."

In parting for the night, Mr. Wilmot shook Vincent by the hand, but the latter's emotions did not allow him to speak.

CHAPTER II.

It was with no enviable feelings that Vincent, on gaining his lonely chamber, seated himself by the open window, and began to reflect upon the sudden and unexpected change in his prospects. When he rose that morning, all was, as usual, bright before him; for he was certain of possessing the confidence of his employer, and entertained a well-grounded hope that he might reasonably look for advancement from the man he had served so long and well. Since his visit to Mr. Wilmot's residence, his spirits had become more buoyant, and he was happier than he had ever been at any former period of his life. It was apparent to him that he had become a favourite with the family; and he fancied that, on the part of Clara particularly, he had discovered indications of an incipient attachment, corresponding to that which, in his own bosom, had already acquired much strength. Although he had scarcely thought of her as one to whose hand so humble an individual as himself might aspire, yet the consciousness of her being partial to him was not the less pleasing because there were obstacles to their union which, he feared, could never be surmounted. After what had occurred, his being invited to accompany Mr. Wilmot and his family on their summer tour, was a circumstance which might

have permitted him to hope, that, although he was poor and dependant, his suit would not be discouraged by parents who felt and acknowledged that, but for him, their only child would inevitably have met an untimely death. Nor are we by any means certain, that there were not moments when Vincent questioned whether, after all, the distance between him and Clara, in respect of fortune, was a difficulty which could not, by proper management, be removed. His continued high spirits, and his evident satisfaction with the position he occupied, certainly favoured the supposition that he indulged in vague but pleasant anticipations of future happiness, with which Miss Wilmot was always in some manner associated.

Now, how changed his situation! What agreeable prospects, in the short space of twelve hours, had been shrouded in darkness! In the morning, his existence spread away before him like a charming landscape, gilded by the sun's new-risen beams; at night, the view was converted into a desolate waste, with not a green spot, or shrub, or tree, to cheer the weary eye! All his delightful visions had vanished, and a sense of loneliness and desolation had usurped the place of happier feeling. He felt himself to be without an occupation in the world, having no object before him worthy of the pursuit. He was, in his own estimation, not only a friendless, but a disgraced being, at whom the finger of scorn would for ever be pointed.

Although Vincent was fully aware that there was

now between him and Clara an almost impassable gulf, yet he was extremely anxious to know how she would receive the news of his alleged crime, and whether or not she would do him the injustice to think him guilty. He was naturally desirous that she, of all others, should believe in his innocence; and he trusted that such would be the case, inasmuch as Mr. Wilmot would doubtless exert an influence in his behalf, and, when necessary, defend his character to the last. There was some reason to hope, however, that she would never learn the cause of his so suddenly quitting her father's service; for it being Mr. Wilmot's wish to save Vincent's reputation, he would certainly impose silence upon those who were already cognizant of the affair.

Notwithstanding that he had an excellent friend and advocate in his employer, yet he could not help feeling that Richard Brown would prove unfriendly enough to disclose all to Clara, and in such manner as to produce an unfavourable impression on her mind. From the first, Vincent was persuaded that Brown rejoiced in the discoveries that had been made, and that he would not fail to turn them to his own advantage. Vincent had clearly perceived that he was attached to his cousin, and he had observed, too, on several occasions, indications of a jealous feeling, arising, as he supposed, from several trifling circumstances, which Brown had probably construed into evidences of Clara's partiality to his rival. After a careful review of his intercourse with Brown from the first day of their visit to Mr. Wilmot's,

he came to the conclusion that he had no reason to count on the continued friendship of his late fellow-clerk; but that he ought rather to regard him as one of the instruments of his ruin, than as an acquaintance, or friend, on whose good offices he could rely. Looking upon Brown, therefore, as his enemy, he thought that, in justice to his own character, he ought immediately to write to Miss Wilmot, with a view to make her acquainted with the whole matter; and to request that she would suspend judgment until her father's opinion should be heard. This would lead her to converse with Mr. Wilmot on the subject, and effectually counteract the influence of any exaggerated statements that Brown might secretly make.

A little reflection, however, rendered him doubtful as to the propriety of addressing Clara. What was he to her (such was his quere), that he should trouble her with a letter on the subject of his misfortune? "Guilty or not guilty," said he, "it is the same thing to Miss Wilmot; and I have no reason to suppose that she feels sufficiently interested in me, to warrant my doing anything of the kind. No; happy as I should be in the certainty that she will pronounce me innocent, I must content myself by allowing things to take their course, and leaving my cause in the hands of my generous friend, her father. I know he will cheerfully undertake my defence; and in his own family, at least, he will not permit it to be thought, that, so far from being a person worthy of their confidence and notice, I am a base and ungrateful criminal."

Having come to the determination to say nothing more to anybody in vindication of his innocence, Vincent took into serious consideration his situation and prospects. He was now without the means of support, and, by insisting upon Mr. Wilmot's retaining his funds, he had reduced his finance below the amount required for almost immediate use. Exclusive of the sum in Mr. Wilmot's possession, he had only forty dollars at command; twenty of which he owed for board, and about fifteen were due to tradesmen for small claims, which he resolved to discharge on the following day. These paid, there would remain to him not more than five dollars to defray his expenses till he could obtain some employment that would afford a livelihood. How long it might be before he secured an engagement of some sort, was, of course, uncertain; but the prospect was exceedingly gloomy, inasmuch as it was known that there were in the city many young men of good standing, who had long been in want of clerkships. His chance of success was diminished by the fact of there being no respectable individual whom he would think of naming as his referee for character and ability. Mr. Wilmot, notwithstanding what had occurred, would have been willing to vouch for his honesty, and to speak in the highest terms of his usefulness as a clerk; but Vincent was too proud to ask such a favour of any man, and particularly of one whom he had left under so peculiar circumstances.

Depressed as he now felt, after surveying his altered condition, and glancing at the difficulties that he foresaw would inevitably beset him, he did not retire to rest until he had determined what course to pursue. He bethought him of his old friend and tutor Allan M'Gregor, who was then residing in an obscure street, prosecuting his studies with the ardour of a college student. This aged scholar, though he occupied but the upper half of a small two-story house, had sufficient room to afford his former pupil comfortable, though humble, lodgings; and to him Vincent resolved to apply for the shelter of his roof, until he should be able to place himself in business.

Next morning, soon after breakfast, Mr. Wray called. He had already seen Mr. Wilmot, and learned that Vincent was no longer connected with the house; and he lost no time in going to the latter's residence, in order to express his sincere regret for what he had done. He had told Mr. Wilmot that he now entertained serious doubts as to the supposed guilt of Vincent, and that, for his own part, he was both willing and anxious that the firm should pay the bank, and retain the young man in their employ. To this, of course, Mr. Wilmot readily assented; but, at the same time, stated that, in his opinion, Vincent would not re-enter their service, while Mr. Wray remained a partner.

When Mr. Wray arrived, Vincent, who was just ready to go out, received him politely, but with less cordiality than he would have shown under

other circumstances. He did not refuse the proffered hand of the junior partner, but took it with some surprise at the evident good feeling indicated by the act.

"You are doubtless at a loss to account for this visit," said Mr. Wray, in a conciliatory tone; "and to say the truth, you have cause to wonder at seeing me here, after what passed last night."

"I must own, Mr. Wray," replied Vincent, taking off his hat and seating himself near to his visiter, "that your coming hither was quite unexpected to me."

"I shall, with your permission, explain the object of my visit. Last night, Vincent, I accused you of a crime which I then believed you had committed, and I deemed the charge to be susceptible of the most conclusive proof. Without assigning my reasons for the sudden change of opinion, I now frankly admit the strong probability of my having been mistaken. I confess that, till I left you last evening, I had attached too little importance to your excellent habits and character. Circumstances directed my suspicions to you; and having once named you as the person I suspected, it was natural I should feel desirous to show that I was correct. This I attempted, without reflecting upon the consequences, or duly weighing all that might be urged in your favour. In a word, I feel that the heavy accusation was too hastily made, and I come to withdraw the charge, and to reinstate you in the service of our house."

"It gives me much pleasure, Mr. Wray, to hear this from your lips, because I shall now have the satisfaction of knowing that there is not an individual who suspects me of the crime of forgery. To do as you desire, however, is quite impossible. It has cost me much to separate myself from the service of one, of whom I can never think but with feelings of gratitude; yet there are difficulties in the way of my returning, which are not likely soon to be removed."

"If you refer to any supposed objection on the part of Mr. Wilmot, I can assure you that he would be glad to see you resume your duties in the counting-room. I have had a conversation with him on the subject, and I know, that, to hear of your return, would afford him the highest pleasure."

"I had reason to believe that Mr. Wilmot would not be averse to my returning to his service; and I am happy to learn that his feelings on the subject are precisely such as I supposed them to be. But there are other obstacles in the way; and, so long as they exist, it is impossible for me to reconnect myself with the house of Wilmot & Co."

"May I ask," said Mr. Wray, "whether I am one of the obstacles you allude to, or whether they are such as my influence will remove?"

"After what has just passed your lips, I could have no objection to the course you wish me to take; although, had I been solicited last night by Mr. Wilmot to appear this morning as usual in the counting-room, I should have declined acceding to

the request so long as you remained connected with the house. Your frank admission, however, of too great haste on your part in bringing against me a charge of so serious a nature, together with your evident desire that I should forget what has passed, and resume my duties as clerk, has removed the difficulty that you personally presented. As to your influence in removing those that remain, I have only to say, that if success might reasonably be expected, I would not consent to your making any exertions in my behalf; not, however, on account of any repugnance I may have, to placing myself under new obligations to you, but for other good and sufficient reasons, which it is not necessary to name."

"I am sorry that you persist in your determination to remain separated from our house, for it is scarcely within the range of probable circumstances, that you will enter the service of any individual so able and willing as Mr. Wilmot to promote your interest. It is the injury you will sustain that makes me regret the step you have taken; and I shall not cease to censure myself as the main cause of this unhappy state of things. We shall part, I trust, good friends; at least my feelings towards you shall continue to be the same as they ever have been since the day I first knew you; and should you have occasion for the services of a friend, you may rely upon my disposition to be of use to you, in any way that may be required."

"I shall forget the part you took in the late af-

fair, and, for the future, shall think of you as that Mr. Wray who, since I had the good fortune to secure a situation in the house of which he is a member, treated me more as a friend and equal than as a poor dependant of the firm. Your kindness I shall never cease to remember with gratitude; and, now that we are to part, perhaps for ever, allow me to thank you, not only for what you have done, but for what you have just offered to do, should I stand in need of your assistance."

Mr. Wray shook Vincent cordially by the hand in bidding him farewell, and with a tear in his eye, left the apartment.

This apparently inconsistent conduct on the part of the junior member of the house, was a matter of suprise even to Vincent, who, during their long acquaintance, had received from him so many decided proofs of his goodness of heart, and of the capriciousness of his disposition. Mr. Wray was a plodding and faithful man of business, who was devoted to the interest of the house to which he belonged, and who seldom allowed anything to interfere with the performance of his duties. From early dawn till evening, he was constantly engaged; and, whenever necessity required it, he cheerfully gave his nights, as well as his days, to the transaction of important business. In his intercourse with those about him, he was frequently crabbed, and occasionally suffered his peevish disposition to break out in his conversations with Mr. Wilmot. The latter, however, never allowed his

equanimity to be disturbed by the moroseness of his partner, considering it a constitutional defect more deserving of pity than of censure. Notwithstanding that the surface of Mr. Wray's feelings was so often ruffled, there was a deep under current of good nature, that ever flowed on in one continued and unbroken stream. If any person under him became disabled, in however slight a degree, from attending to his business, Mr. Wray was the first to suggest his leaving his post; and if a vacancy in the establishment was thereby occasioned which could not be readily filled, he would perform a double duty, until the clerk was sufficiently restored to resume his place at the desk. During the illness of any one connected with the house, he was a constant visiter to the sick-room, and ever solicitous about the patient's comfort and welfare. After a hard day's labour, he would cheerfully sit up, when necessary, to administer medicine; and when the circumstances of the individual were such as to render it difficult, if not impossible, for him to defray the expenses attending his sickness, Mr. Wray's purse was always sure to be materially lightened of its burden. To his own needy friends and relatives he annually rendered the most important aid; while, at the same time, he did not fail to scold them soundly, whenever he discovered anything that put him out of humour. Such was the man who accused Vincent of the crime of forgery, with the fullest conviction that his charge was supported by conclusive evidence;

and who, without farther investigation, became within twelve hours exceedingly sorrowful on Vincent's account, and wellnigh satisfied that the accusation was false.

However incensed Vincent might have been at the course adopted by Mr. Wray in reference to the alleged crime, he now banished all feelings but that of respect for his late whimsical employer. On a careful review of all the circumstances by which the charge was supported, he readily admitted to himself that there was sufficient reason for Mr. Wray's acting as he had done; and that, in a similar situation, he should have felt it incumbent on him to take precisely the same step that the junior partner took on that occasion. The more he reflected on the subject, the more surprising it appeared that Mr. Wray should have so soon abandoned his former opinion; and he could only attribute it to the strong influence which his naturally kind feelings at times exercised over his sound judgment.

CHAPTER III.

Immediately after the departure of Mr. Wray, Vincent took up his hat and was about to leave the room, when the servant knocked at the door and announced a visiter below. Charles could think of no individual so likely to call at such a time as Mr. Wilmot, as he felt confident that his friend would embrace the earliest opportunity to visit him, and renew the offer of his counsel and aid. Without having any particular reason for expecting him that morning, he had, nevertheless, counted upon seeing him; and every time he heard the bell ring, he stepped to the window to see if Mr. Wilmot were not at the door.

He requested the servant to show the visiter up; and during the few moments she was absent on this errand, Vincent rapidly surveyed the ground on which he stood, considered his altered condition, and reflected upon the propriety of accepting any overtures that might come from Mr. Wilmot. He had never wavered in his determination not to re-enter the counting-room of Wilmot & Co.; but if the head of that firm had anything in view for him, he saw no good reason why he should not avail himself of such an opening in his favour.

While he was turning these things in his mind, the

door was again opened, and Richard Brown entered. This young man, always foppish in his dress and manners, displayed that morning more than his usual dandyism in his attire. He had one or two additional rings of an extraordinary size on his fingers, and a splendid gold rope-chain, which he had just purchased, garnished his bosom, already sufficiently ornamented with a large diamond pin of great brilliancy. His cloth cap was set on one side of his head, the better to display his glossy black locks, and he carried a thin whalebone cane, with a fine gold head, bearing a device of his own invention. One of his hands was covered with a white kid glove, while the other was left naked, in order that his jewels and gold might have their due effect. His dress, then worn for the first time, was cut in the latest fashion, the peculiarity of which, in this instance, was carried to the extreme, and gave him an outré appearance, that attracted the astonished gaze of every passer-by. Such was the exterior of Richard Brown on the morning in question, when, with an air of nonchalance or affected ease, he entered the apartment of Charles Vincent, and addressed him in a tone and style ill adapted to the occasion.

Vincent, on discovering who the new comer was, betrayed as much surprise as he would have done had the King of France been announced. He bowed coldly to his old fellow-clerk, extended a chair, which was not immediately accepted, and remained standing, with his hat in his hand, as if he had but

a moment to bestow on his visiter, and was impatient to see him depart. Undisturbed by this icy reception, Brown, after giving his cane a twirl or two, proceeded quietly to draw off his glove, set his cap on the table, and arrange before the mirror a few locks that had been put out of place.

"Ah, Vincent," said he, on entering the apartment, "how do you do this morning, my dear fellow? Hope I see you well. I heard yesterday about that unpleasant affair of the forgery, and was positively struck dumb with astonishment on learning that Wray had accused you. I was informed, too, that the firm had dismissed you; and supposing that you must, of course, be in a devil of an awkward predicament, I determined to call upon you, at the earliest possible moment, to offer my services."

"Your services are not needed, Mr. Brown," replied Vincent, with a decided scowl upon his brow.

"I see you are in bad spirits this morning, Vincent; but I expected as much, for it is no trifling circumstance for a man like you to lose a good situation and be accused of a crime all in one day. It would put Job himself out of patience. But you must cheer up, my boy; don't take the thing too much at heart; and if there is anything I can do for you, command me to the extent of my humble ability. How do you like this new cut, Vin—"

"Mr. Brown," interrupted Vincent, "will you be so good as to state the object of your coming

hither this morning? My time, sir, is precious, and I have none to waste in idle conversation."

"Oh, no other object than to see if I could be of use to you. You would have thought it devilish strange if I had omitted to visit you in your moments of difficulty, if not of disgrace; and I am the last man to abandon an old friend, at a time when he may stand in sore need of advice and assistance."

"I stand in need of neither, Mr. Brown."

"I am rejoiced to hear it, for your sake," said Brown, adjusting his cravat before the mirror; "for I certainly expected to find your situation such, that the assistance (pecuniary or personal) of a friend would be very acceptable. It is true that my means are none of the largest; and at this moment, in consequence of the claims of tailors, hatters, and other confounded duns, they are at an unusually low ebb; but still, had you required some addition to your finance, I think I could have managed to accommodate you with a small sum. By-the-way, Vincent, what do you think of this chain? It's a pretty thing; don't you call it so? I'll tell you how I came by it, if you are in no particular hurry."

"I say to you again, Mr. Brown, that my time is precious, and that I have not leisure, if I had the inclination, to listen to your idle prattle."

"The devil!" exclaimed Brown, in affected astonishment; "now I should be obliged to you, Vincent, if you would tell me what has put you in

such a testy humour this morning. What have I done, pray, that you should speak to me in that manner? You get into difficulty with your employers, are compelled to relinquish your clerkship, and then, without the shadow of a cause, treat your best friends in the most cavalier manner possible. Pshaw! Vincent, put away that scowl, and act like a reasonable man; don't be vexed at me because Wray has acted rather harshly in the affair of the cursed check."

"Can you ask, without a blush, why I should appear now in what you are pleased to call a testy humour?"

"Most assuredly I can; nor do I exactly perceive the reason you may have for putting such an interrogatory."

"Impudence unparalleled!" exclaimed Vincent, walking to the window, and immediately returning to his former situation. "Brown, we can no longer be friends. The reason I need not name, for it is as well known to you as to me. The sooner we separate, therefore, the better for us both."

"Just as you like, sir; and if it be your desire that this interview terminate our intercourse, of course I can have no objection. I recommend you, however, as a friend, not to act rashly, nor to break with one who has the power, as well as the inclination, to promote your interest."

"I can accept of no favours at your hands. I am decided as to the course I ought to adopt in regard to you; and, my wishes being now known, it

only remains for you to withdraw, and in future to consider me as a perfect stranger."

"In one moment I shall most cheerfully accede to the first point of your request. Allow me, before I go, to reply to a remark of yours, in which you observed that the reason of your present conduct is as well known to me as to you. I deny having any knowledge of the cause that has given rise to this extraordinary behaviour; unless, indeed, you imagine that I took part with Mr. Wray in the charge he made, and, I had almost said, substantiated."

"And now, having made the denial, and added insult to injury, perhaps you will do me the favour to leave the house."

"You are mistaken, sir, if you think that I have either injured or insulted you. You ought to be more explicit, and not to speak riddles that no person but yourself can solve. I perceive that you take me to be your enemy; but I can only say that you have strangely misapprehended my character, as well as my present feelings towards you. So far from having had any agency in this unfortunate business, I no sooner learned that you had quitted the service of Wilmot & Co., than I went direct to my uncle, and solicited for you a lucrative clerkship in some foreign port; believing that it would be agreeable to you to leave New-York, where, though you may be as innocent as an unborn infant, you will find it a difficult matter to procure another situation. My uncle, without the

slightest hesitation, permitted me to proffer you the post of assistant agent at Havana; and the chief object I had in view this morning was to communicate this pleasing intelligence to you. I hope, therefore, you will not suffer your excited feelings to get the better of your judgment, but that you will study your own interest so far as to accept the offer of Mr. Wilmot."

"I thank Mr. Wilmot for his kindness," replied Vincent, "but I decline his offer, in consequence of its having been solicited by you. Your story, sir, has not altered my opinion of you in the slightest degree; on the contrary, your desire to procure my absence from the city is, I am convinced, but a part of a villanous attempt, on your part, to accomplish my ruin."

"Sir, your language is insufferable," said Brown; "and did I not pity you in your present fallen condition, the circumstance of your being quite beneath my notice, should not protect you from the chastisement due to your impertinence."

"Begone, sir," said Vincent, scarcely able to restrain himself from laying violent hands upon Brown; "or I shall help you through yonder door in a manner that might not prove altogether agreeable."

"At my leisure, sir," replied Brown, taking up his cap, "but from no fear of what you menace. I came hither for your good, and not for mine; and my recompense is in being told that my efforts in your behalf are but a part of a villanous attempt on my part to accomplish your ruin; and in being

threatened with a violent expulsion from your room, unless I leave it the moment you bid me begone. One word more. What object could I possibly have in entertaining such a purpose as you impute to me? or how should I be benefited by your absence? What could be my motives in attempting to ruin, or procuring the absence of one whose insignificance makes such a supposition ridiculous? You—"

"I cannot and will not bear this insolence," said Vincent, laying down his hat as if he were about to put his threat in execution; "I now warn you, Mr. Brown, that another minute's delay will oblige me to show you the outside of the door. It will be no child's play, I promise you, when I take a scoundrel by the collar to give him the castigation he deserves."

"I do not fear you," replied Brown, tauntingly; "and, to convince you of it, I shall apply this cane to your shoulders, by way of showing you the danger of calling your betters scoundrels. Take that, and that."

Brown gave Vincent two strokes with the light cane, and was in the act of striking him the third time when a powerful and well-directed blow laid him upon the floor. In an instant he was upon his feet again, and in a posture to defend himself from Vincent's attack, while the latter closed with his antagonist for the purpose of thrusting him out of the room. This he found to be far more difficult than he had anticipated, for Brown was quite equal to him in weight and strength, and in activity, per-

haps, his superior. During the struggle, Vincent was much annoyed by the blows which Brown managed to inflict upon him; but the consequences, though bloody, were not very serious, for the reason that the proximity of the adversaries prevented their doing much damage. While each held the other fast, neither was sufficiently at liberty to injure the other, destitute as they both were of all weapons but those furnished by nature. In the contest, tables, chairs, et cetera, were overturned, making a noise that must have alarmed the whole house, if not the neighbourhood. Vincent was evidently getting the better of his antagonist, since he had succeeded in bringing him within arm's length of the door; and he continued the fight with greater vigour than Brown, who, after a few minutes, began to exhibit signs of approaching fatigue. There was little probability, however, of Vincent's being entirely successful; for the door being closed, he could not open it without relinquishing his hold, and thus surrendering all the advantage he had gained.

An accident now occurred that changed the face of things, and would have placed Vincent completely at the mercy of Brown, had the latter, at that moment, possessed sufficient strength to avail himself of the circumstance. Vincent, in making a violent effort to reach the knob of the door with his right hand, while he held Brown firmly clinched with his left arm, stumbled over a small tabouret, or stool, lost his balance, and fell upon his side; Brown falling over him in such a manner, that, had his strength

permitted, he might have held Vincent in his helpless position, and chastised him to his heart's content. Vincent fortunately succeeded in recovering the use of both arms, and was soon on his feet again, notwithstanding Brown's efforts to keep him down. The struggle for supremacy was now for a moment suspended by tacit consent; and both standing a few feet apart, regarded each other with looks of defiance, though neither felt a strong inclination to renew the combat. Brown, but for two reasons, would gladly have withdrawn; first, he was fearful that, to go quietly away after what had occurred, would look like an acknowledgment of defeat; secondly, his clothes and hair were so much disordered, that he would have been ashamed to be seen in the street. Vincent, though he regretted the necessity of acting so rude a part in his own room towards an old friend, did not relinquish his purpose, but only waited a little to see whether Brown would not think it advisable to retreat.

At this moment the door was opened, and in walked the person whom the belligerant parties could least have wished to see. It was impossible for Mr. Wilmot not to discover that something unusual had occurred; for, besides the visible evidence of the fray borne by the combatants, the disordered state of the room made the fact quite apparent. The clothes of both young men were much deranged, and some of them badly torn; and Vincent's hat, which lay in the middle of the floor, looked as if it might have been trampled upon by a troop of horse.

Brown's nose, having come into collision with the fists of his antagonist, was bleeding most profusely; and the blood had not only soiled his own linen, but, in the encounter, had put that of Vincent in a most woful plight.

On discovering Mr. Wilmot, the young men said nothing, but hung their heads, and exhibited other signs of shame at being caught in such a condition from such a cause. Mr. Wilmot, much surprised by so unexpected a scene, looked at them for a moment in perfect silence; and seemed, by alternately shifting his glances from one to the other, to be striving to ascertain which of them was most deserving of his severest censure. At length he addressed himself to Brown, who began to rearrange his dress, preparatory to making the best of his way home at the earliest possible moment.

"Pray, what does all this mean, young man?" said Mr. Wilmot, in an angry tone.

"Only a little rencounter, sir, between Mr. Vincent and myself," said Brown, wiping the blood from his face, and putting his hair in order before a glass.

"Well, sir," replied Mr. Wilmot, somewhat offended at his nephew's nonchalant air, "as these little rencounters between you and Vincent are not at all to my liking, perhaps you will do me the favour to state why you came to this room, and what gave rise to the recent disgraceful fray. I insist upon hearing, from your own lips, every particular."

"I came hither," said Brown, dusting his coat, "for the purpose of communicating to Vincent the offer of a situation at Havana, which you last night gave me permission to make to him. I found him, however, in a very crusty humour, and had not been many minutes in this chamber, before I was given to understand that I was regarded in the light of an intruder; and at length, without the slightest provocation on my part, I was peremptorily ordered to withdraw. This I did not immediately do, for I had not yet told him the purpose of my errand; but when I came to state that I was authorized by you to offer him the situation of assistant agent at Havana, he threatened to expel me from the room unless I left it on the instant. Offended at such treatment—outrageous, I think I may term it—I delayed longer than I should have done, had his *order* been a simple *request*, couched in courteous language; when he seized me by the collar, and attempted, by brute force, to put his threat in execution; an effort which I effectually resisted. These are the facts in the case; and now, having given them agreeably to your commands, I must request permission to go home."

"You may go, sir," said Mr. Wilmot.

When Brown had departed, Mr. Wilmot inquired of Vincent whether his engagements would allow of a few moments' conversation; and being answered in the affirmative, both drew chairs near the open window and seated themselves.

"You are now, Charles," commenced the elder

gentleman, "your own man, free to act as you please; and, for that reason, you may think it an unwarrantable liberty that I take, when I thus interfere between you and Brown. I feel, however, that what I have from time to time done for you, gives me something like a parental authority, by virtue of which I may claim the right to ask an explanation of any unbecoming conduct on your part. You will do me the justice to believe, that nothing but the interest I feel in your welfare could induce me to meddle with your private affairs, now that your separation from our house has dissolved all connexion between us, save that of friendship. You had been in my service so long, and your uniformly good conduct had made you so great a favourite, that I came to regard you more as a very near relative than as an ordinary clerk. Nor did the charge brought against you by my partner alter my feelings towards you in the slightest degree; for I am now convinced, and so is Mr. Wray, that you are innocent of the crime imputed to you. Having said thus much in vindication of my right to investigate this difficulty between you and my nephew, I would thank you to give me a correct history of the quarrel from its commencement; and should I discover that Brown is in the wrong, I will make him rue this day ere a week shall elapse."

"I should be ungrateful, sir," replied Charles, "were I not immediately to obey the command you have laid upon me; but I shall have little to

add to what Mr. Brown has already told you, excepting to state candidly, as you desire, my motive for acting as I did. From the moment I heard the accusation made by Mr. Wray, I felt convinced that Richard Brown had set that matter on foot, and induced your partner to believe that no other person than myself could have committed the forgery. I can adduce no proof which would be satisfactory to you that such is the case, and yet I have good reasons for believing that my suspicions are well-founded. Convinced as I was, and still am, that Brown is now an inveterate enemy of mine, I felt that, after what had occurred through his agency, his visit to me this morning, was an insult which I ought to resent, by requiring him to leave my apartment. And here it may be as well to correct an error in his statement. He told you that I *ordered* him to depart; and that he would have immediately complied with a *request*, though he would not obey a *command*. I did request him to do so; or, rather, I more than once hinted, in a way not to be misunderstood, that I desired him to leave me; and it was not till my patience was quite exhausted, that I ordered him away, and subsequently attempted to enforce obedience."

"I think you are much mistaken in the supposition that my nephew is your enemy. In the first place, he had no part or lot in accusing you of the crime, as I learned from Mr. Wray, who assured me that, although Brown knew that suspicion had

fallen on you, he had more than once asserted his belief in your innocence. Secondly, the circumstance of his applying to me to receive you back into the counting-room, or to give you a situation at some foreign port, convinces me that his feelings are decidedly friendly rather than inimical."

"You may be correct," replied Vincent, "but I thought otherwise."

"I perceive that you are of the same opinion still," observed Mr. Wilmot, after a short pause; "and, I apprehend, an attempt to reinstate Brown in your favour would be a hopeless one."

"We can never be friends again," said Charles.

"At least do not be enemies," said Mr. Wilmot, "and then I shall feel no apprehension of any serious consequences growing out of your quarrel. Can you promise me that, so far as it lies in you to prevent it, this misunderstanding shall not again lead you into contention with my nephew?"

"I have no disposition ever to see or speak to him again on that or any other subject," replied Vincent, "and it shall not be my fault if the dispute do not end here."

"Thank you," said Mr. Wilmot. "I will now leave you; but, before I go, allow me to renew the offer of the situation at Havana. It is one that I think you will be pleased with. You may consider of this at your leisure; and if you should conclude to accept the place, you may take passage either in the Esperance, which sails next week, or in the Epervier, which goes early next month."

"I sincerely thank you for your goodness," replied Vincent; "but I have determined to remain in this city, at least for the present."

"Well, then, remember that I stand ready to be useful to you whenever you may require my assistance."

CHAPTER IV.

IMMEDIATELY after the departure of Mr. Wilmot, Charles went to the house of his former teacher, M'Gregor. He found him, as usual, in his small uncarpeted room, sitting by the side of an oldfashioned bureau, so constructed as to serve the purpose of a writing-desk, by letting down, in a horizontal position, a lid made for that use. On this lay the most heterogeneous mass of materials that the imagination can conceive. The most conspicuous of these objects was a Greek and Latin Testament, which had been in his possession, and in constant daily use, for the preceding thirty-five years, and the margins of which were literally covered with manuscript notes, written in an illegible shorthand. By the side of this was an octavo volume, in which M'Gregor was accustomed to record, in a hand so fine and close, the transactions of the day, that, as the page lay open before you, it appeared as if not a particle of white remained. Near this, and partially covered with scraps of papers containing his biblical criticisms, were several very old volumes of the Latin and Greek classics without covers, together with a copy of Euclid's Elements, and many other books used by him at the University of Edinburgh, the titles of which

we have now forgotten. There was also a standish of an antiquated character, that, from its appearance of great age, might have existed from the period of the Christian era. Here and there were crusts of bread, the remains of several dinners, and among piles of books and manuscripts were an old pair of suspenders, which had supported his breeches when his shoulders were thirty years younger than on the day in question. The pigeonholes of the desk were crammed with letters, papers, pamphlets, and a vast variety of other things, which had been in progress of accumulation for more than half a century, and which had probably lain there undisturbed for many years. On one corner of the lid, and partly covering this immense mass of literary lumber, hung a coarse linen shirt, which the old man intended to put on as soon as it should be sufficiently aired; while on the other corner, were suspended a pair of long woollen stockings, that were to be drawn on the moment he had finished making a note on the first verse of the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John.

In one corner of the small room was a bed, neatly covered with a counterpane of patchwork; and opposite to this, a large green chest, which served the double purpose of a press for clothes, and a seat for any visiter that might prefer it to a rickety chair, which, in years long gone, had lost its back and part of its bottom. Over the chest hung a picture about four feet square, intended to represent the *urbs Edinburgum*. Next to his copy of

the New Testament, M'Gregor prized this picture more than anything he possessed; and it was his delight to stand before it with a pupil, and expatiate on the beauties of that modern Athens. The painting, considered as a work of art, was more than execrable; yet this circumstance did not, in any degree, diminish the pleasure with which he contemplated that representation of his favourite city.

When Charles entered the room, M'Gregor was seated at his desk reading his Testament through a common burning-glass, the only one he had used in many years to assist his sight. His face was that morning more ruddy than usual, a complexion that was natural to him, in spite of his extremely sedentary and abstemious habits. His hair, long and perfectly white, was carefully combed backward over his lofty head, and reached low in his neck, where it terminated in two or three large curls. M'Gregor was in his shirt-sleeves, for he never, even in winter, wore a coat in the house; but he had on an immense vest, devoted to domestic use, which had been so often patched, that not a particle of the original material was visible. Twenty-five years had probably elapsed since that garment was first worn; and although, when we last saw it, it was in tatters, yet, with the care he bestowed upon it, no doubt existed in our mind that it was the last he would ever procure for the home department. In justice to the old gentleman, we must observe, that he never ventured out with

that old vest on, as he had another, newer and perfectly sound, which he kept to wear abroad. His breeches were of red bombazet, patched in various places with stuffs of different kinds and colours; and his stockings were woollen, and drawn up so as to cover nearly half of his thighs. An old pair of shoes, that permitted his toes to project about two inches through the opening in front, completed a dress in which this superb scholar had pursued his studies for at least a quarter of a century.

We have said that Mr. Abel Sampson and Mr. M'Gregor strikingly resembled each other. This is true; yet they differed essentially in at least one particular. The former was saturnine, quiet, and grave, speaking but seldom, and then uttering his thoughts in the fewest possible words. The latter was exceedingly loquacious and merry, possessed of a few anecdotes which, if he did not relate well, he certainly told to the same individual very often; putting himself, if not his auditors, in a very good humour, which always evinced itself in hearty bursts of laughter. As Mr. M'Gregor has long since paid the debt of nature, we trust there is no impropriety in thus alluding to these peculiarities, by way of contrasting them with the imperturbable gravity of the scholar of Ellangowan.

When Vincent entered the room, M'Gregor addressed him in the same style, and almost in the same words, he had been accustomed to use every morning, while his favourite pupil was taking lessons in Latin.

"Ah, Carole, my dear," said he; "*quomodo vales hodierno die?*"

"*Bene me habeo, præceptor,*" replied Charles; "*bene te habes?*"

"*Bene, bene,*" replied the kind old gentleman, smiling, for he was delighted to receive an answer, however simple, in the noble Roman tongue. "Eh, dear!" continued he, when he had examined his pupil's countenance through his eyeglass; "*quid es tristis?* Why do you look so sad, my dear? have you lost your copy of Virgil or of Horace?"

"Worse than that, my good sir," replied Vincent; "I have lost my place."

"Only your place!" said M'Gregor; "but sit down, Carole, my dear, not *set* down; remember the distinction between those two verbs, which are so often used indiscriminately by the vulgar; the first is a neuter verb, and the latter active. I believe I have turned your attention to this once before."

Had he said a hundred and fifty times, he would have come nearer to the correct number.

"You may either take that chair, Carole, which, to confess the truth, is a little the worse for wear, or you may sit on my chest under the *urbs Edinburgum*, where, I doubt not, you will be comfortable. Speaking of the *urbs Edinburgum* reminds me of an anecdote told to me by that capital scholar, Dr. Adam, while we were classmates at the university; ha, ha, ha!" (Here M'Gregor laughed heartily for about five minutes, and, at the same

time, related the anecdote in such a manner that it was impossible for Vincent to comprehend ten words.) "But he was a good fellow, though, that Dr. Adam, and a better scholar I never saw; none like him on this side of the Atlantic; and no wonder, my dear, for they do not pay that attention to the learned languages, that we of the old countries do. They are too fond of the almighty dollar, and can't spare the time. Many and many a time," continued M'Gregor, turning his eyes to the picture, "have I walked along that street when I was a student, with my Virgil or my Homer in my hand, studying as I went, so that not a moment should be lost. Ah, Carole, that's the way to make one's self a scholar. Go on, my dear, as you have begun, and I'll be bound there are not many young men in this city that will excel you. But what did you say? oh, I remember; dearest me, how forgetful I'm growing! Lost your place, eh, Carole? Well, that is bad, I must confess; but I once lost my place, too, for in the old country I changed my religious views, and, of course, was obliged to relinquish my parochial duties, which was, as I have before hinted to you, the main cause of my coming to the United States. May I ask how you came to meet with such a misfortune?"

Vincent then proceeded to give his friend a detailed account of what had occurred within the preceding two or three days, to which the old gentleman listened with much concern, occasionally interrupting the narrative to criticise an expression,

or to ask Vincent whether he knew the derivation of some particular word.

"I have now," said Charles, "stated my case to you; and, as I am entirely destitute of money, it only remains for me to ask whether you can manage, without inconvenience to yourself and wife, to accommodate me with lodging until I can find some employment?"

"To be sure we can, Carole; I can answer for Mistress M'Gregor as well as for myself. There is a small room containing a chair and a bed; *accipe, utere ut libet.* We have nothing here, you see, to brag of, ha, ha, ha!—but what there is, you are quite welcome to consider as your own, so long as you shall honour my poor chamber by occupying it. In that little closet you will find plenty of Latin and Greek books; and I beg to suggest, Carole, that your sojourn here will afford you an excellent opportunity to review your grammars; for, as I have before hinted to you, no man can be considered an accurate scholar, unless he have an intimate acquaintance with grammar. You might also read with me a few books of Virgil, and as much of Horace and other good authors as our time may permit."

"I fear," replied Vincent, in a despondent tone, "that, much as I love the works you have named, I shall be compelled to neglect them, until I find the means of gaining an honest livelihood, without being a burden to my friends."

"Tut, man!" exclaimed M'Gregor; "what sig-

nifies a livelihood if it can be gained only by abandoning your books. Now I am as poor as a church mouse, yet I would not exchange my learning for all the wealth of the city New-York. You observe I do not say the city *of* New-York, as uneducated people do, for that is not correct. This I have before hinted to you. We say in Europe, *urbs Edinburgum;* consequently it is more elegant, as it is quite proper, to say, the city New-York. Remember, Carole. What were we speaking of? oh, I recollect. It is well enough, to be sure, to take some thought of what we are to put on, as of what we are to eat; but, then, we must not think so much of them as to neglect weightier matters. We must continue to feed the mind, for that will live for ever; while the body is short-lived, and can claim our attention but a few fleeting years. Riches are not worth the time and labour necessary to acquire them; and my observations have taught me, that the poor are generally far happier than the rich.

"'Magnas inter opes inops,'

says Horace; and in the same ode, if I mistake not, he also observes,

"'Benè est, cui Deus obtulit
Parcâ, quod satis est, manu.'

This is very true, especially if the person to whom God has given with a sparing hand, possess a good education, and be well acquainted with the dead languages. I pity the man who spends his

days and nights in acquiring that which can be of very little use to him in this world, and none in the next.

"'Tu secanda marmora
Locas sub ipsum funus; et sepulchri
Immemor, struis domos.'

I quote again from Horace, for he took a correct view of these matters."

"It is true," said Charles, "that quite too large a portion of human life is devoted to the acquisition of a fortune; but it is also true, that we must labour for the means of supporting life, and a moderate competency is frequently the work of years."

"Not necessarily so," rejoined M'Gregor; "for a competency, such as I possess, for example, can be acquired in a very short time; and then a little teaching of mathematics and the classics, gives one a very good living. My means, small as they undoubtedly are, and contemptible as most people would consider them, are more than sufficient for my purposes. I have already curtailed my expenses ninepence a day, because I found that I was living, as they say, too fast. My health began to suffer; and now, instead of eating my bread and cheese and two herrings, with a pint of good ale per diem, I confine myself principally to bread and cheese, and indulge but twice a week in the luxury of herrings and beer. This has not only reduced my expenses considerably, but it has made me feel so much better, that I can now study sixteen hours out of the twenty-four with perfect ease. Thus

you may perceive how little a man needs in this world, and what a very small sum suffices for all his actual necessities. Do not, therefore, my dear, let us hear you speak of neglecting your studies, for the unprofitable employment of amassing money."

"I cannot consent," replied Vincent, "to be dependant on any person for a livelihood; and as to teaching, I do not consider myself qualified to take the charge of half a dozen village urchins. I acknowledge, however, the truth of your remarks. With your limited wants, you may be considered as comparatively—"

"One observation, my dear, if you please, on the word comparatively," interrupted M'Gregor, eagerly; "if I mistake not, I have before hinted to you that this word should be pronounced *com*paratively, with the accent on the first syllable, and not on the second, where you placed it. I am aware that Dr. Johnson and others accent the second, but I prefer to accent the first, and so, I believe, do a majority of polite speakers, especially in the old countries; where, among people of education, these things are better attended to than in America. But, Carole, as I have before hinted to you, the reason is obvious; for the people of the United States are too much addicted, so to speak, to the unnecessary pursuit of money-making, and do not give so much of their time to the acquisition of knowledge, as we of the old countries do; consequently we cannot expect from them that degree of elegance in speaking and writing, and that

accuracy in classical attainments, which distinguish the scholars of the city over your head—the *urbs Edinburgum.* But go on, if you please, with the remark I interrupted."

"I have forgotten," said Charles, "what I was about to observe; but it is no matter now. My time, my dear sir, is limited, considering all that I have to do this morning; but, before I go, allow me to say, that while I remain in your house, I shall cause you and good Mrs. M'Gregor as little inconvenience and trouble as possible, and that I shall spare no exertions to find such employment as will enable me to live without being a burden to any of my friends. I shall only ask of you the privilege of putting my trunk in the adjoining room, and of sleeping there; for I shall obtain my meals down town, where I expect to be much engaged in seeking some respectable occupation."

"But why not come home to dinner?" inquired M'Gregor; "I have not, it is true, much to tempt you, ha! ha! ha! but then I could get an extra herring or two, and what with the cheese and some good strong ale, we could make out a tolerable meal."

"I do not doubt it," replied Charles, smiling; "but it will be more convenient for me to eat elsewhere. Good-morning, Mr. M'Gregor; I shall see you again this evening."

"*Cur non loqueris Latinè?*" inquired the old man, rising and taking Charles's hand; "you have not forgotten how to bid me farewell in Latin."

"*Vale, præceptor et amice,*" said Charles, as he shook M'Gregor's hand.

"*Vale tu quoque, discipule,*" said the old man, as he saw Vincent descend the stairs and open the door leading into the street.

Just at this moment a thought struck the aged scholar, and he hastened with all the speed he could command to the front window, out of which he thrust his head and called "Carole, Carole," at the top of his voice. Vincent had gone the distance of a square, but he turned back as soon as he heard his friend call, supposing the old gentleman was about to request his attention to some trifling commission.

"Did you call me?" inquired Vincent.

"I did," replied M'Gregor; "and it was to bid you remember my observations on the word *comparatively*, and not forget what I told you in reference to the very common, but erroneous, phrase, the city *of* New-York. Bear in mind that the preposition of is elegantly omitted; consequently you should say, the city New-York, as we (I mean the educated part of the community) in the old country say, the city Edinburgh, or, to speak in Latin, *urbs Edinburgum.* Remember, too, the difference between the verbs to *sit* and to *set;* the first is a *verbum neutrum*, and the latter a *verbum activum.* I have hinted these things to you before to-day. Go now, my dear; *vale.*"

CHAPTER V.

VINCENT had not been long home, when a visiter was announced by the servant of the house. In a few moments a young man of rather prepossessing appearance came in, and observed that he was the bearer of a message from his particular friend, Richard Brown, to Mr. Charles Vincent, late a clerk in the employ of Messrs. Wilmot & Co. There was nothing objectionable in his manners, excepting, perhaps, a smile that played about his lips when he alluded to Charles's clerkship; which might have signified that he held such an occupation in contempt, or that he was well acquainted with the circumstances which occasioned Vincent's not being at that time in the employ of Wilmot & Co.

Charles received the note after requesting his visiter to be seated, and discovered it to be a challenge to mortal combat, in the event of his refusing to make a suitable apology for what Brown termed "outrageous and unjustifiable maltreatment" during his morning visit. This was a missive of so extraordinary a character, that Vincent did not at first know how to act, or what to say to the gentleman who was waiting to receive his answer. He read and reread the letter, unable, apparently, to realize the fact that his former friend and companion had, within a few days, become an enemy who

sought his life. A few moments' reflection, however, sufficed to show him the true position in which he stood; and having acknowledged to himself, that, whether his suspicions in regard to Brown were well founded or not, he had given cause sufficient to justify the demand for satisfaction, he saw that it only remained for him to accept or refuse the proffered challenge. The alternative was not to be thought of, however desirous he might have been to avoid a duel; for he was as much as ever convinced that Brown was at the bottom of the forgery, and, consequently, deserved the rough handling he had experienced in the morning.

Charles had always abhorred duelling as a relic of a barbarous age, but chiefly because he considered it hostile to Christian principles; and he had repeatedly said that, under no circumstances, could he be induced to countenance this honourable mode of adjusting difficulties. He had loudly censured those who, avowedly averse to the practice, wanted the courage *not* to fight; and he saw that the time had now arrived for deciding, whether *he* dared subject himself to the imputation of cowardice, by refusing to accept a challenge.

Closing the letter and advancing towards his visiter, who was still standing, Vincent said, "Sir, had this note come from any other source, I should have occupied less of your time in deciding upon the course to be pursued; but a message of this nature from one with whom I have long been intimate, was, notwithstanding what has occurred, so

unexpected, that my surprise, added to a detestation of duelling which I am not ashamed to avow, prevented my determining, immediately, in what manner to answer this call. Mr. Brown allows me the alternative of apologizing for my conduct of this morning. I scarcely need observe that I cannot avail myself of the humiliating way he suggests of avoiding a meeting. I shall be ready, therefore, to-morrow morning, at six o'clock, on the duelling ground at Hoboken, to give Mr. Brown the satisfaction he demands. In matters of this sort, it is customary, I believe, for the seconds of the parties to arrange the preliminaries; but, sir, I am no duellist, nor do I regard the rules and regulations which govern the duellist's proceedings; and, for these reasons, I name the time and place now, in order to spare my friend the unnecessary trouble of calling upon you. The choice of weapons being mine, I select pistols, and the distance shall be ten paces."

"This singular mode of proceeding, allow me to observe, sir, would, in the event of a fatal issue, place my friend, as well as myself, in a new, not to say an awkward, position. If it be agreeable to you, I respectfully request, in behalf of my friend, that you should put your acceptance in writing, and empower some gentleman to settle with me the terms on which the meeting shall take place."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," replied Vincent, rather tartly; "and if you and your friend's position be, as you say, an awkward one, allow me to remind

you that it is one of your own seeking. I have accepted the call, named time, place, and weapons; and if Mr. Brown is not the dastardly coward he takes me to be, I shall see him to-morrow morning at the spot I have designated. I beg to add, that on this subject I have nothing more to say."

Mr. Hervey (for this was the gentleman's name) was so disconcerted by the novel manner in which the message he bore had been responded to, that he scarcely knew how to act. At first he thought the proper course would be, to consider the challenge as not accepted; but a little reflection showed him that this would look too much like a backing-out, to be sanctioned by his friend and principal. He felt, too, a little irritated on his own account; for he thought the general scope of Vincent's language was disrespectful; and had his time permitted him to scrutinize the objectionable expressions, he would doubtless have found something on which a new quarrel might be instituted.

After deliberating a few moments, Mr. Hervey decided that he could not, with propriety, leave Vincent with the understanding that anything had been arranged for the meeting; and he therefore determined to go back and consult with Brown previously to consenting that the affair should be thus conducted, in propria persona, by the challenged party, without the aid of a friend.

"I am not sure, Mr. Vincent," said Hervey, "that I should not be justifiable in regarding your response to my friend's message as equivalent to an evasion

of the call; but I shall take a little time to confer with Mr. Brown on the subject, and in half an hour from this I shall have the honour of waiting upon you again."

"You may spare yourself that trouble, sir," replied Vincent, "for I consider the matter settled so far as I am concerned; and if, under any pretence, your friend should decline the meeting he has courted, I shall take the freedom to hold him and his adviser a brace of contemptible cowards."

This language, as may readily be supposed, put the gentleman in a passion; but he deemed it best to command his feelings for the time, and to postpone his resentment until the affair then on the tapis should be brought to a close. Without vouchsafing a word in reply, the indignant second bade Vincent good-morning, and withdrew, firmly resolved to call upon him at an early period for satisfaction.

When Vincent found himself alone, he sat down to ponder the new and extraordinary situation in which a combination of circumstances had placed him. Incensed as he was against Brown, he was sorry to find himself arrayed in so hostile an attitude against his former friend; but he the more lamented his unfortunate position, because it forced him to assume a character which, of all others, he had always most detested, that of a duellist. He saw, too, that he should deeply offend his friend and benefactor Mr. Wilmot, and, perhaps, render himself odious in the eyes of one, whose good opinion he was particularly anxious to enjoy. It was now,

however, too late to think of extricating himself with honour, and it only remained for him to procure some friend to attend him at the meeting. This was likely to be no easy matter, for Vincent's acquaintance was extremely limited, and consisted chiefly of that class who would, from conscientious scruples, be unwilling to render him the slightest service on such an occasion. There were but two young men within the circle of his friends to whom he deemed it worth while to apply; and it was problematical whether even they would not refuse their aid, in consequence of their peculiar situation in society. To these, therefore, he determined to go forthwith.

The first individual he called upon, declined having anything to do with the matter; the second was neither at home, nor expected till evening. This left him in rather an unpleasant predicament for one who had such business on his hands; for he well knew that, if he appeared upon the ground without a friend, his adversary would be under the necessity of refusing to fight; and that the circumstance of his coming unattended, would be considered as a trick resorted to for the purpose of avoiding danger. He did not, however, despair of securing the services of his friend William Gray, whom he meant to call upon again in the evening.

On his way back, Vincent stopped at a celebrated restaurant in Broadway, for the purpose of getting a lunch, and a glass of some iced beverage to cool his burning tongue. The events of the morning had

caused such an excitement in his system, that the blood coursed with an accelerated pace through his veins, and produced a thirst like that attending a high fever. Throwing himself upon one of the cushioned seats in a retired box, he gave his orders to a waiter, and took up a newspaper that lay upon the table. He had not been there long when he heard his name called; and, looking about him, he discovered the very person whom at that moment he most wished to see.

"Vincent, thou solitary man," said Gray, in a tone loud enough to be heard in every part of the room, "come over to me, or I will to thee, just as thou pleasest."

"I will come to you," replied Vincent, "since you seem to have the advantage of a cool breeze from that window."

"Now tell me, friend Vincent," said Gray, who was somewhat facetious, "(for be it known that I have a Yankee's curiosity, as well as his propensity to interrogate), what could have sent so steady a youth as you are to a place like this, at a time of day, too, when all dutiful clerks are usually attending to their master's affairs? Something extraordinary has happened or is about to happen. Come, out with it, my boy; and let me caution you, by-the-way, against that ice, if you are warm."

"Is there anything so very remarkable," said Charles, smiling, "in my coming hither to get a mouthful, that it requires to be explained?"

"Very remarkable," replied Gray, commencing

on a cold fowl; "very, very; for I do not hesitate to state it as my belief, that this is the first time you ever set foot into the halls of a restaurant. You are one of those good, honest, industrious souls—pardon me—that love their business, but especially their books, better than the rich viands of this honest Gaul. Add to this the fact that I never knew you to honour a place like this with your presence, and you must confess that it is natural I should feel a little anxious on the subject of this striking change in your habits. I cannot help, my dear young sir, feeling a little apprehensive as to the consequences to which this may lead, especially if you should unfortunately continue to indulge that fondness for iced—lemonade! which has been so injurious to your constitution. Let me put a wing of this fowl on your plate."

"I venture to predict, Gray," said Vincent, "that I shall much surprise you by confessing that something extraordinary has occurred, as you will readily admit when you shall have heard the little history I am about to relate to you, if you can spare the time to listen."

"Go on, sir; go on," said Gray; "I am all attention. Before you begin, though, have your glass filled, and put into it a little Port wine to counteract the effect of the ice."

Vincent then made his friend acquainted with the particulars of his difficulty with Brown; and, though he did not conceal the fact of his being no longer with Wilmot & Co., he did not, of course,

make any allusion to the cause of his withdrawing from the employ of that house. He concluded by stating that he had been called out, and that he was compelled to ask Mr. Gray's services in the capacity of second.

"Well, my boy," said Gray, when Vincent had finished, "you are a lad of spirit, and I would have given a trifle to be present when you put your ten fingers on that foppish vagabond. But I would have given still more had it fallen to my lot, instead of yours, to show him into the street. You are not, perhaps, aware that he and I hate each other most cordially, and that I shall never die happy till I see him begging his bread. Well, sir, that is the fact; for once upon a time he crossed my path in such manner, that we were unavoidably brought into contact; and as his conduct was in every respect unlike that of a gentleman, I was compelled to take notice of it in a way that subsequently resulted in a quarrel. The scamp challenged me, and I accepted; but the distance I named did not accord with his ideas of safety, and he declined the meeting. I offered to fight him over a table, the pistols to lie upon the ground, and to be raised and fired at a signal to be agreed upon. This he called savage, and him I called coward: so the matter ended; but he has since given me cause to think more meanly of him than I did then; and now I hold him not only an arrant coward, but a consummate scoundrel. As to the matter now on hand, in which you are to act so conspicuous a

part, provided Brown will give you an opportunity, I can only say that it depends upon circumstances whether I can be of service to you or not. I shall be able to decide this evening; and if you will call at my lodgings about ten o'clock, I will give you an answer. It would afford me the highest pleasure to see you drill the villain, and I should have no hesitation in complying with your request, were I not so circumstanced that a rash move in such an affair might prove my ruin."

"I will call upon you at the hour you name," said Vincent, "and if you decline accompanying me, I must, of necessity, go on the ground alone."

"That would not do," said Gray, "for they would call it a *ruse* of yours to avoid the duel; and I would rather lose my own right hand, than to give the dandy an opportunity to crow over you. He would like nothing better than to get safely out of the scrape at your expense; and I would stake my head against a mint-julap, that he trembles in his pumps at this very moment."

After finishing their meal, Vincent and Gray parted to meet in the evening. About ten o'clock they saw each other again, when Gray told Vincent that he had considered the subject well, and had come to the conclusion, that, situated as he was, he could not, without hazarding too much, be his second on this occasion. He regretted the necessity he was under of refusing his services, especially as the challenger was a man whom he cordially hated; but there were good and sufficient

reasons why he should withhold his aid in a matter against which public opinion had begun to set so strongly.

Vincent felt disappointed on receiving this answer, because, after his interview with him at the restaurant, he had felt assured that Gray's strong dislike of Brown would induce him, at any risk, to become his second. He was now awkwardly situated, there being no other person to whom he could apply with the slightest chance of success; and, if there had been, the lateness of the hour would have rendered it impossible to make the necessary arrangements for the morrow. No other way remained than to go on the ground alone, waiving the advantage of a friend, and insisting upon his adversary's proceeding without any regard to this circumstance.

By five o'clock on the following morning Charles landed at Hoboken. He pursued his way leisurely along the smooth walks of that delightful retreat, where he had so often enjoyed a few hours' respite from the heat, dust, and noise of the town. The sun had risen above the city, that lay, as it were, upon the bosom of the blue waters; but the dense foliage that overhangs the banks, prevented his rays from penetrating into the midst of these cool and fragrant bowers.

Vincent had been accustomed, during the summer months, frequently to visit this spot early in the morning; and it had been a source of great pleasure to him, to sit down under one of the numerous trees,

and read till it was time to return. He generally chose the hour of sunrise, because the atmosphere is then fresh and fragrant; and also because he could then be there *alone*, which might not be the case at any other time of the day.

Under other circumstances, he would have enjoyed, as usual, this visit to his favourite haunts; but his feelings were of quite a different character from any that he had ever before experienced. The idea of meeting an old friend with a view to engage in a deadly contest; of fighting a duel, and thus violating his religious principles; and of offending, perhaps beyond the point of forgiveness, a valued friend and benefactor, was sufficient to render him extremely unhappy. Life was not so highly prized by him, that he dreaded the thought of placing it in jeopardy; yet there was to him something painful in the reflection, that he might possibly never retrace his steps along these umbrageous banks, never revisit alive his beloved city, nor again behold that lovely being, whose image had, of late, been almost the sole occupant of his mind.

Seating himself upon one of the deal seats, Vincent cast his eyes over the broad and beautiful scene that lay stretched out before him. The dark blue waters were slightly rippled by the morning breeze, that came up fresh and balmy from the bay; while the distant bluffs, the islands, and the tall spires that shot up from the city, were bathed in the early beams of an unobscured sun. Numerous craft, of various kinds and sizes, were moving silently along,

and, among others, was a small boat, containing, as nearly as he could ascertain, four individuals, including the oarsman. It had apparently left the town from the vicinity of Warren-street, and, at the moment his attention was attracted to it, it was about half way over, and standing directly towards the spot where the meeting was to take place. The longer he watched the boat, the stronger was his conviction that it contained Brown and his second; and when it disappeared behind the bluff, he did his antagonist the justice to acknowledge that Gray's imputation of cowardice was false.

As it yet lacked three quarters of an hour to the appointed time, Vincent remained seated, and he had just commenced adding a postscript in pencil to a note he had written on the preceding evening, when he heard footsteps approaching by a small path concealed from his view by a clump of bushes. At the next moment, a young man whose dress and general appearance indicated a respectable station in society, approached Vincent; and as he passed him, made a scarcely perceptible bow, and touched his hat. Vincent recognised him as a person he had seen before, but when or where, he could not remember. He felt a strong inclination to speak, as the stranger walked leisurely along; but before he could make up his mind to do so, the young man had disappeared.

After finishing his postscript, Charles turned into the main path, with the intention of going direct to the duelling-ground; but he had not proceeded

more than a hundred yards, when he saw the stranger seated under a large oak-tree, making a sketch of the scenery visible from that point. "You have selected, sir," said Vincent, slackening his pace, "a fine view on which to exercise your talents."

"It is one to which I cannot do justice," replied the other, smiling and holding up the paper; "I have frequently tried to make a tolerable sketch of that view, but have invariably failed, as in the present instance."

"I should not consider this a failure," said Vincent; "on the contrary, it appears to me an accurate, as well as a spirited, drawing. I should recommend you to finish the picture."

"It does not please me," replied the young man; "and, when that is the case, it is quite useless to go on, as I am sure to be unsuccessful. Allow me to ask, sir," he continued, after a moment's pause, "whether we have never before met."

"I believe we have," replied Vincent; "but I do not remember where I have had the pleasure of seeing you. Your countenance is so familiar to me, that, when you passed me a few minutes since, I was about to speak to you as to an old friend."

"It was precisely so with me," said the stranger; "and I should have ventured to address you, had you not been engaged at that moment. I have in vain endeavoured to bring to my recollection the time and place of our former meeting. If you are going, sir, as far as the fields that terminate these

walks, I will, with your permission, accompany you."

Vincent and the young man then walked down one of the paths leading to what are now termed the Elysian Fields; a spot, at that time, far less beautiful and attractive than it has since been made by its enterprising and wealthy proprietor. Their conversation turned upon the scenery in that vicinity, the Hudson, the Highlands, and other kindred topics that naturally suggested themselves; and when they had arrived at the end of the walk, they felt almost as well acquainted as if they had been a score of times in each other's society. During the little time they had been together, Vincent had more than once been on the point of making the stranger acquainted with the nature of his morning's business, and of confessing the necessity he was under of having the aid of a confidential friend. Many considerations deterred him, for a while, from saying a word on the subject; but at length the frank and open manners of the youth encouraged him to state what had called him thither, and to ask the favour of his attendance on the occasion.

"I am aware, sir, that I am making a strange request," continued Vincent, "considering that we have known each other but a few moments; but if you have any scruples on the subject of duelling, or have the slightest objection to lending me your aid, for which I should ever be grateful, I hope you will not hesitate to say so frankly."

"I must own, sir," said the young man, "that I

am no friend to duelling; and yet I admit that a man may be so circumstanced as to be under the necessity of sending a challenge, as the only means in his power of resenting an injury. Your being a stranger to me (and yet not quite a stranger) will not prevent my complying with your request; for I hope to be instrumental in settling the difficulty, so that a recourse to arms may be dispensed with. May I ask your name, sir?"

"It is Charles Vincent, sir; there is my card. I shall be under great obligations to you for your assistance in this matter; but I apprehend your generous efforts to satisfy my adversary will prove unavailing, for the reason that nothing like an apology for the act that gave rise to the challenge, can ever emanate from me."

"Worse cases," said the stranger, smiling, "have been accommodated by skilful seconds without burning powder; and I do not, in the least, despair of preventing your letting daylight into your opponent. Be assured, however, that I shall do nothing to compromise your honour. There is my card," continued he, handing Vincent a neat card of address, with the name Henry Duval written thereon. "Tell me now, if you please, the name of your adversary, and that of his second."

"The name of the principal is Richard Brown," answered Vincent.

"Richard Brown!" exclaimed the youth; "is it possible?"

"You know him, then?" asked Vincent.

"I do," replied the stranger; "and he is, of all others, the person whom I could have most desired to see opposed to my principal, especially if that principal were a dead shot. I should be much better satisfied to stand in your place than in mine."

"You have asked me the name of his second," said Vincent; "that I cannot tell you; for he withdrew, without leaving his card, shortly after delivering his message."

By this time they had come to a small piece of woods, through which it was necessary to pass in order to reach the road, when it occurred to Vincent's friend that the difficulty of access to the duelling-ground, would probably prevent their reaching it at the appointed hour. At this moment, a boat with a single oarsman was seen gliding along in a direction parallel to the shore, when Vincent proposed going in it (if a passage could be procured) to the foot of the high bluff, where they could walk to the spot, either along the beach or over the hill. As this would save much time and labour, the second agreed; and on hailing the boatman, and offering a good fee for the service demanded, they received an affirmative answer, and in a few minutes were landed on the rocks under the steep and woody hill. Vincent objected to being carried to that part of the shore directly opposite to the ground, wishing to conceal from the boatman the object of their visiting, at such an hour, so suspicious a place. They had still some distance to walk; and as the tide was so high as

to prevent their going by the shore, unless they clambered over the huge rocks with which it is cumbered, they ascended the bluff by a well-beaten path that winds through the woods.

As they passed over the hill they discovered the boatman pulling quietly towards the spot they sought, from which they inferred that the fellow suspected their object, and intended to witness their proceedings. When they drew near to the ground, a boat was seen tied to a rock, with a solitary individual sitting in the stern; and, at the distance of a quarter of a mile beyond, two men were observed in another boat hauled partly on the shore.

When they arrived at the place of meeting, Brown and his friend were there. The preliminaries were soon adjusted, and the principals took their stations at the distance of ten paces from each other, ready to fire on the signal's being given by Vincent's friend, to whom the performance of that duty had fallen by lot. At that moment a gentleman appeared upon the ground from the direction of the river, and threw both friends and foes into utter consternation.

"Mr. Wilmot again, by all that's lovely!" exclaimed Brown, dropping his pistol, which was discharged by the shock. The ball grazed Mr. Hervey's heels, and whizzed within four feet of Mr. Wilmot.

"It would not be very difficult to divine," continued Brown, in a louder tone, looking significantly at Vincent, "to whose cowardly precaution we owe this unfortunate interruption."

"Not to the precaution of my principal, if your remark had reference to him," replied Charles's friend; "but I suspect that I should not be far wrong in presuming that the gentleman comes by your special invitation, to see the duel fairly conducted."

This last remark, made in a taunting manner, and accompanied by a sarcastic smile, had the effect to enrage Brown beyond the power of replying. He remained silent for some seconds, and then said to his antagonist,

"Sir, I charge you, before these gentlemen, of having notified my uncle of our intended meeting, in order to screen yourself from danger. I therefore proclaim you to be a coward! But do not think to escape me thus."

"Mr. Wilmot himself," replied Vincent, calmly, "can inform you at whose instance he came hither. He approaches; ask him; I fear not his answer."

Brown did not venture to put the question, though he was convinced that Charles had purposely procured Mr. Wilmot's attendance, with a view to escape, by such an interruption, the peril of a fight. That gentleman heard Vincent's last observation; but he was, at the moment, so incensed at finding him in such a situation, that he refrained from making a single remark to contradict the charge of cowardice preferred by his nephew.

"If I mistake not, Charles," said Mr. Wilmot,

with some degree of sternness, "at our last interview you gave me a promise that this unhappy difference between you and Richard, should not again bring you into hostile collision with him."

"If I remember rightly, sir," replied Vincent, handing the pistol to his second, "I promised that, if the dispute did not end there, it should not be my fault. I believe I may say, with truth, that I have not broken my promise; since, for an alleged injury which Mr. Brown believes himself to have sustained from me, he demanded the satisfaction which I did not deem it proper to refuse."

"Then *he* was the challenger. That is the reverse of what I was told. Richard," he continued, walking in front of his nephew, "you will do me a favour by returning immediately to the city; and, if it be the same to you, I should prefer that you go in my boat."

"I obey you," replied Brown, sullenly, "but I am under the necessity of crossing with my friend, in the boat that brought us hither."

"You are at liberty to do so," said Mr. Wilmot; "but, two hours hence, I shall expect to see you alone in my private office."

This last observation was made in an under tone, so that it escaped all other ears than those for which it was intended. Brown and Hervey then went to their boat, which lay near to the ground, while Mr. Wilmot, without speaking again to Charles, withdrew to the boat that lay farthest up the river.

Vincent and his friend remained till all the others had disappeared, when, in coming near to the shore, they discovered that the waterman who brought them had already pushed beyond hailing distance into the stream. This untoward circumstance compelled them to set off for Hoboken ferry on foot.

CHAPTER VI.

On their way back, Duval stated what he knew concerning Brown.

"I mentioned," said he, "that in an affair with your opponent, I would rather be principal than second; and I will now tell you my reason for detesting that individual as I do. Till this morning I had never seen Brown, and to me, personally, he never gave offence; though with a younger brother of mine he once had a misunderstanding, which caused my present dislike. The circumstances of the case were these: At a convivial party given by a common acquaintance, Brown, while in his cups, made rather free with the name of a young lady with whom my brother James was in love. At the time he was probably not aware of my brother's partiality for the girl; but, when the fact was made known to him, instead of apologizing for his language, or, at least, ceasing to make her the theme of his unhandsome remarks, he became still more offensive, and disgusted every gentleman present, including his own particular friends.

"James was not slow to resent these calumnies, nor was he scrupulous about the choice of epithets which he applied to the slanderer. High words ensued, and there was every appearance of a personal rencounter. Many of the gentlemen took

my brother's part; for, independently of his having the right side of the question, he was much more popular than Brown, whose insufferable arrogance, joined to his offensive manners, rendered him an object of dislike to numbers of his acquaintance. Those of the party who were particularly intimate with him, refrained from saying anything, considering his conduct in thus trifling with the character of a respectable lady, as wholly indefensible. This apathy on the part of his friends had a tendency to inflame the passion into which James's retorts had thrown him; and, during the paroxysm, he seized a glass filled with wine, and dashed the contents into my brother's face.

"Provoked beyond measure by this outrage, James struck him a severe blow in the eye, which brought him to the floor. After this they closed, and Brown, who was the elder and the larger of the two, would doubtless have come off victor, had not the friends of both parties interfered and separated them. Brown wore a black eye for nearly a month. He retired immediately after the fracas, swearing that he would be revenged."

"This occurred about a year ago, did it not?" asked Charles.

"It did."

"I remember the circumstance of the black eye, and also the story he told in explanation of the cause. He said that at a poll during an election, he had been struck by a man excited by liquor, who must have mistaken him for some other per-

son. I recollect perfectly that all had their doubts about the truth of his statement; and it was the general opinion among the clerks that he had been engaged in some fray, out of which he had come off second best."

"Not long after this affair," continued Charles's friend, "my brother, who had become very attentive to the young lady, was forbidden by her father to continue his visits. The reason assigned was, that he had understood James had, on a certain occasion, got intoxicated, made an unjustifiable use of his daughter's name, and abused a young man of high respectability, who, although unacquainted with her, had generously defended her character. The information, he alleged, had come from a source entitled to credit; but he declined giving the name of his informant. James, of course, denied the truth of this story, and offered to bring several respectable individuals willing to testify to its falsity. He told him that *he* was the person who had defended his daughter's reputation, and that he could substantiate the truth of his allegation by the testimony of twenty witnesses. The unreasonable old gentleman, however, was inexorable; and so convinced was he of the correctness of what he had heard, that he refused to investigate the matter in compliance with my brother's request.

"Subsequently to this, James had but one interview with the young lady. He then went to the South and died. There can be no doubt that

Brown was the old gentleman's informant, as no one else could have felt sufficiently interested, to be willing to make such a misrepresentation. Then his threatening to have revenge, warrants the conclusion that it could be no other than he. I therefore ascribe my brother's death to him, since it was the effect which this circumstance had on his mind, that induced James to leave home and go to the South, where his feeble health soon sunk under a malignant fever which he there contracted."

Having recrossed the ferry, Charles went immediately home, and in the course of the day removed his effects to the room assigned him by M'Gregor: and he also called upon those to whom he was indebted, and discharged all his obligations. This done, he found his little stock of money reduced to five dollars, and himself without the means of maintenance. He now saw the necessity of immediate exertion, if he would not become a burden to one who could ill afford to increase his expenses a shilling per diem for the support of a guest. It was unpleasant to Vincent to be thus compelled to accept, though for a limited time, even the shelter of his roof; and for this favour it was his intention to pay liberally, as soon as his circumstances would permit.

When he had taken possession of his new but humble lodgings, and arranged all his books and other papers as he had been accustomed to see them in his own room, he sat down, after locking the doors, and gave vent to a copious flood of tears. He be-

lieved that, in meeting Brown, he had forfeited the good opinion of his benefactor, and he now felt friendless and alone, dependant, even for a straw pallet, upon a man who was himself steeped to the very lips in poverty. Then the fact of his still resting under the imputation of guilt, supported by such evidence as would warrant a jury in convicting him, added to the impenetrable gloom that had suddenly fallen upon his prospects, weighed heavily on his spirits, and caused a bitterness of feeling that tears alone could relieve.

Having indulged his grief for several hours, during which M'Gregor was too busily engaged with a passage in the New Testament to intrude upon him, Vincent put on his hat and sallied into the street, without any definite object in view other than to walk no matter whither, as if he would calm the agitation of his mind by motion and a change of scene.

When he arrived at the corner of Chambers-street and Broadway, an incident occurred which at once gave a favourable turn to his fortunes. A young lady, apparently about eighteen years of age, was in imminent danger of being thrown from a vicious horse, which reared and plunged so violently, that a good horseman would have found it no easy matter to retain his seat. It appeared that the animal had been extremely skittish, insomuch that the gentleman in attendance, apprehensive for his sister's safety, had several times solicited her to dismount and return home in a carriage. Being a girl of

spirit, and, withal, an excellent rider, she had positively refused thus to acknowledge her inability to manage the horse, and had laughed at what she called the idle fears of her timid brother.

When they had reached the corner of Broadway and Chambers-street, the animal still champing his bit and covered with foam, a kite, flown by a boy, raised suddenly before him, and, making a pitch, struck him on the head, causing him to spring sideways, and then to leap furiously forward with the intention of running away. His course was immediately arrested by the young lady, who held him with a tight rein, and thus, by the severity of the curb, so much increased his irritation, as to render it impossible for her to dismount. Notwithstanding the violence of his plunges, she had managed to keep her seat, although the spectators, more frightened than she, expected to see her dashed upon the pavement and killed.

A large crowd soon assembled, but not an individual stepped forward to render any assistance. There were, doubtless, many among them who, had they known what to do, would gladly have risked their lives to save hers; but, in the situation in which she was placed, it was difficult to see how efficient aid could be successfully given. A hundred people were constantly crying wo! wo! while others, at the top of their voices, were directing the fair rider what to do, and bidding her not be afraid. The horse, rendered more furious by the noise, leaped as if he would throw the lady over his head,

and then reared apparently with the desire to fall backward and crush her beneath his body. Then he sprang sideways, wheeling at the next moment, or throwing his heels high in the air.

When Vincent saw the imminent peril of the girl, he paused a moment as if to consider how he might aid her; and then, approaching the animal from behind, went close to his side and seized him firmly by the bridle near the bit. The horse backed, dragging Vincent with him, and by violent jerks attempted to set himself free. Perceiving that he could not easily be quieted, Charles called a stout fellow who stood in advance of the crowd, and requested him to take hold of the reins close to the curb; which done, he went near to the young lady and desired her to throw herself into his arms. This seemed like so dangerous an experiment, that she hesitated till he had several times repeated the request; when, having drawn her foot from the stirrup and arranged her dress, she threw herself forward and fell without injury into Vincent's arms. The rescue was so unexpected and complete, that the moment she was placed upon the sidewalk by her preserver, the people sent up a tremendous shout of approbation.

The lady, who was less agitated than any of those gathered around her, rewarded Vincent with a smile, and thanked him for his assistance; observing that she would have been able to conquer her steed, had she not unfortunately lost her whip.

Having intimated her desire to go immediately

home, Vincent caused a hack to be brought. The gentleman who accompanied the lady now made his way through the crowd, and, when the carriage drove up, he invited Vincent to accompany him and his sister to their residence. Charles declined under the plea that his time would not admit of his doing so; but when he saw that the young lady looked disappointed, and even ventured to say as much, he stepped into the coach and took a seat by her side. They drove down Broadway as far as St. Paul's, through Vesey to Greenwich-street, turning towards the Battery, and stopped in front of a large house, the appearance of which indicated that the occupants were citizens of wealth and consideration.

Vincent was introduced to the parents of the brother and sister, and was most cordially received by them, especially after they had learned the particulars of what had occurred. They insisted upon his dining with them that day, and in various ways evinced their gratitude for his successful exertion in behalf of their daughter. The old gentleman was a lawyer of eminence; but there was in his deportment a high-bred air, that distinguished him from the majority of this class of people. He had been educated in Scotland, had mixed with the upper classes of the English metropolitan society, and had travelled extensively through the Oriental countries, as well as in all parts of Europe. Such a character could not fail to be extremely interesting to his guest, who rejoiced that accident had procured him so valuable an acquaintance. Vincent, on his

part, was peculiarly happy in all his remarks, and had the satisfaction to perceive that he was listened to with something more than the attention demanded by common politeness. He evidently succeeded in inspiring his new friends with a highly favourable opinion of his abilities and intelligence.

Before he had been long in the house, the old gentleman begged to know his name. In his reply, Vincent volunteered, in a few brief observations, some additional information concerning his situation, which he secretly hoped might result to his advantage. This led the gentleman to inquire whether, being out of employment, he was desirous of obtaining business; and on being answered in the affirmative, he paused a moment, and then turned the conversation upon other subjects.

During his visit Charles received much attention from the young man and his sister, the former of whom was an exquisite of the first water, and in intellect far inferior to the young lady. He talked about horses and dogs, and appeared to be intimate with all the leading characters in the sporting world. On these subjects Vincent manifested a deficiency of information; consequently, he was obliged to remain silent while they were under discussion. He was, however, a good listener, and seemed interested, which encouraged his new friend to give him all the latest sporting intelligence.

Late in the afternoon Vincent rose to go. The old gentleman, desiring a few moments' conversation, requested Charles to follow him to the library.

"You have said, Mr. Vincent," began the host, "that employment would be acceptable to you. Are you a tolerable penman?"

"There is a specimen of my writing, sir," replied Vincent, showing a small paper covered with memorandums.

"That will do. Come to my office as soon as you please, and leave the rest to me. What say you?"

"I accept your kindness with thanks," replied Vincent.

"Then allow me to advance a hundred dollars of your salary, by way of outfit, as the politicians say."

"You are very good, sir," observed Vincent, declining to receive the money; "but I must first earn it, which I hope to do to your entire satisfaction."

"Well, then," said the advocate, "let me see you to-morrow."

Charles now withdrew with feelings quite different, as may be readily supposed, from those with which he entered that house. He was so elated with his unexpected good fortune, that he could scarcely refrain from the most ridiculous conduct in the street. This was something so unlooked for, that his spirits rose as much above the ordinary level as, a few hours previously, they had been below it. He now considered himself well established, for he was an excellent penman, and had no doubt of being able to give good satisfaction as a copyist. It was not such employment as he would

have selected, had the choice been left with him, being rather too confining for one whose constitution seemed to require considerable exercise. Nevertheless, he was well contented, and, in the plenitude of his joy, did not question his ability to perform the duties required of him, without materially injuring his health.

On his way home it occurred to Vincent, that as he was now provided with a situation, and, consequently, not likely to remain with M'Gregor longer than a very few days, he could not put a portion of his money to a better use, than by providing such a supper as the old gentleman would partake of with the highest pleasure. This was no sooner thought of than determined upon. The first thing he did was to repair to a well-known porter and cider vault, where he left an order for a dozen of their best London Brown Stout, to be sent home immediately. Afterward he called at a neighbouring grocery, and procured a variety of such articles as could not fail to make the old scholar's mouth water.

As he was leaving the shop, the first person he met was his friend Gray. "Ah, my pale-faced young friend of a literary turn, how do you do this afternoon?" began this facetious young fellow; "pray what inference is to be drawn from the fact of your being seen to issue from the shop of a vender of

"'Wines, teas,
And groceries!'

Can it be that you have suddenly addicted yourself to iced-water, otherwise called gin? or have you been learning the prices of sugar, coffee, and rice, with a view to determine whether matrimony may be safely ventured upon? By-the-way, though, before you answer those sensible interrogatories, tell me whether there is any hope of Brown's recovery?"

"Brown is alive and well," replied Vincent, "for aught that I know."

"But did you not meet him this morning?" asked Gray.

"I did," answered Charles; "but no powder was burned, at least not designedly; consequently, no blood was drawn."

"Well, don't that beat the devil!" exclaimed Gray; "I was in hopes to have had the pleasure of attending the scoundrel's funeral to-morrow afternoon, at half past five o'clock, from his late residence, No. — —— street, without farther invitation. But tell me, how, in the name of all creation, came you to let him off without so much as breaking his arm or leg? I knew you did not care about drilling his vitals, but I certainly counted upon your doing a little damage, such as the fracture of a bone, or something of that sort."

"We were disturbed," said Charles, smiling, "else you might have had the satisfaction of attending my funeral from my *new* residence, where I hope to have the pleasure of your society this evening at supper."

"I accept your invitation," said Gray; "and now, if you please, give me the particulars of this harmless meeting."

Vincent then proceeded to give a detailed account of that affair; and when he had finished, Gray said, "I must now tell you what I did this morning. When you had left me last evening, I began to regret that I had allowed anything to prevent my standing your friend in that matter. 'The devil take public opinion and my peculiar situation,' said I; 'why should I be influenced by such considerations, and refuse to aid an old friend against an individual whom we both despise? I'll be his second, let the consequences be what they may!' I then put on my hat and walked down to your lodgings, but did not succeed in eliciting an answer to the bell. It was past twelve o'clock, and I presume all were in bed and asleep. I determined to call upon you very early in the morning, and offer my services; but, as the fates would have it, I slept longer than I intended, and did not arrive at your boarding-house till after five o'clock. You were gone. I had then three quarters of an hour—too short a time to admit of going conveniently to the duelling ground by way of Hoboken, especially if there should be a delay at the ferry. I decided to go over in a small boat from the foot of Canal-street; but, when I got there, no boat was to be had for love or money. The rascally boatmen were not to be found; and, after spending nearly half an hour in running about the wharves, I was compelled to go down to the ferry

at Barclay-street, where I succeeded in finding a man who agreed to convey me over, but would not stipulate to reach the place by six o'clock. I jumped in, however, not expecting to arrive in season. I am generally a day after the fair. We had not gone far when I descried three boats going towards the city from the direction of the high bluff; and I felt convinced that they contained your little party of pleasure. It was a quarter past six when I reached the ground. Nobody was there; but, as the grass was beaten down in several places, I took it for granted that the meeting had taken place. I searched for blood, but nothing of the kind was perceptible.

> "All bloodless lay the (un)trodden grass,
> And bright as summer was the glass
> Of Hudson rolling quietly.

No laughing. *Hudson's glass* may not be quite intelligible; but, never mind, I'll improve the parody at my earliest convenience."

By this time they had arrived opposite the dwelling of M'Gregor. "Here is my humble place of residence," said Vincent; "and now, sir, as I have some little matters to attend to immediately, I will leave you for the present, provided that you will promise to come hither two hours hence."

"That I will do, of course," said Gray, looking up with some surprise at the exterior of Vincent's habitation; "and now, friend Charles, if it were not an impertinent question, I would ask thee how thou camest to select this lowly roof for thy domicil."

"Poverty compelled me to do so, William Gray. Ay, poverty. Why do you stare? Did I not tell you yesterday that I was no longer in the service of Wilmot & Co.? Well, sir, that being the case, and my purse lying in the last stage of consumption, I found myself under the necessity of asking my old friend and teacher to allow me to occupy a chamber, until I could find something to do for a livelihood. Permission was granted by him, and I removed forthwith. Fortune favoured me, as she always does the brave, and with her assistance I have secured the situation of copyist. Connected with this there is a romantic adventure, a history of which I will give you on some future occasion."

"One question more, and then you may go. Pray who is the old friend and teacher of whom you spoke?"

"His name," replied Charles, "is M'Gregor."

"M'Gregor!" exclaimed Gray; "Allan M'Gregor, the Scotchman?"

"The same," replied Charles. "Do you know him?"

"Certainly I do," answered Gray; "for I was his pupil nearly a year, and what I know of *hic, hæc, hoc*, he taught me. It is a long time since I saw the old gentleman, and I have often wondered what had become of him. I assure you that it will afford me much pleasure to meet him; for he was, when I knew him, one of the most affectionate men that the sun ever shone upon."

At the appointed hour Gray arrived, and went di-

rectly to Vincent's room, where the supper had been secretly prepared, in order to afford an agreeable surprise to M'Gregor. When all was arranged, Charles opened the door that led into the scholar's room, and invited him to take a seat at table.

"*Eh, Carole? quid ais?*" said the old man, without raising his eyes from the page before him; "if I mistake not, you said something about a table. *Repete, si tibi placeat.*"

"I have a table spread in my room," observed Charles; "and I should be gratified by your affording me the pleasure of your company."

"I will be there incontinently," said M'Gregor; "but first permit me to make one note on John x., 30, lest the idea which I desire to secure, may not occur to me again. Ah, Carole," continued the old man, after he had finished the note, "what a treasure learning is! I would not exchange my education for all the wealth of this city; for what signify earthly goods? you can only wear one suit of clothes at a time, and can eat only a certain quantity at a meal, whether you be rich or poor. Never mind the money-making, then, and *stude diligenter*. Now let us see what you have been providing in the line of creature comforts, ha, ha, ha! You are a queer boy, Carole; always thinking of the outward man, and of that which contributeth to his satisfaction. Well, it must be allowed that our stomachs are not to be entirely overlooked, otherwise we should lack the strength requisite to pursue our studies. But who have we here?"

"This is my friend, Mr. William Gray," replied Vincent, "who informs me that he was once so fortunate as to be under your tuition."

"Ah, Gulielme! Gulielme! *quondam discipule mihi!*" exclaimed M'Gregor, seizing Gray by the hand; "how do you do, Gulielme Gray? Have you forgotten your Latin yet?"

"I have neglected it so much of late, that I fear it has escaped me," replied Gray.

"Eh, dear! that's a pity," said the old student, in a mournful tone; "you have lost that which is more valuable than silver or gold; ay, than precious stones. But we'll talk of this again, my dear; our present purpose seems to be to consume this food, or *opsonium* (to use a Latin word signifying provisions or victuals), which the munificence of our friend Carolus hath procured for the gratification of our natural appetites."

The three friends seated themselves at table; and M'Gregor, however much he might delight in feeding his mind, now showed that good viands, accompanied by London Brown Stout, were things not to be despised.

"Allow me to inquire, Mr. M'Gregor," said Gray, after they had got fairly to work, "whether you continue to study as hard as you formerly did."

"Quite," replied M'Gregor, taking his second glass of porter; "I study all the time, excepting those few hours which I devote to sleep and the necessary duties of life. It is the only way to become learned, my dear. We of the old countries,

especially of the *urbs Edinburgum*, set so high a value upon learning, that—that—Carole, hand me a piece of that cheese, please. That's capital. Where did you find this good porter, my dear? it reminds me of old Scotland. I believe, Gulielme, I did not finish my sentence. I was thinking intently upon this delicious beverage and the et ceteras. *Animus est in patinis*, ha, ha, ha! Well, as I was saying, we set so high a value on human learning—and, now I think of it, I must make a note of the thought that has just come into my head. Excuse me," said the old man, on returning to his seat after a short absence, "I have been making one remark upon a passage of the New Testament, which, in my opinion, has been incorrectly rendered into English. I shall take an early opportunity to explain that matter. Another glass of porter, Carole; it really seems to do me good, and it is certainly incomparatively better than any that I have tasted since I left the old country. Carole, my dear, you are not so triste as you were this morning. Something agreeable has befallen you, I hope."

"Very agreeable, I assure you, my dear sir; for I have secured such employment as will prevent my taxing your generosity and kindness longer than a very few days."

"Well, that is good news, certainly," observed M'Gregor, "although it will deprive me of your society. Good news, good company, and good—porter, ha, ha, ha! Oh, how much we have to be

thankful for! *Ago tibi gratias*, Carole, for this exquisite pleasure. One more glass, if you please, my dear."

"I am happy, sir," said Charles, "in being the means of affording you some moments of enjoyment. Our friend Horace, you know, advises us to seek pleasure occasionally in wine, and why not in porter?"

"Very true, Carole; ha, ha, ha! quote a passage, my dear."

"*Sic tu sapiens finire memento, tristitiam vitæque labores, molli, Plance, mero,*" said Vincent.

"Good!" exclaimed M'Gregor; "ha, ha, ha! Oh, how it delighteth my soul to hear you quote those immortal verses. Give us another, Carole."

"*Nunc vino pellite curas,*" said Vincent, highly amused by the old man's unusual glee, but somewhat apprehensive of the effects of the porter.

"Excellent! excellent!" cried M'Gregor; "again, Carole, again."

"*Dona præsentis rape lætus horæ, ac linque severa.*"

"Ha, ha, ha! how delightful!" exclaimed the old man; "one more glass, and then another quotation to justify this tumultuous joy."

"*Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem: Dulce est desipere in loco,*" said Vincent, pouring out another glass of porter, and now really alarmed for the consequences.

"*Recte dicis*—well quoted!" cried M'Gregor; "ha, ha, ha! I can endure the sentiments for the

Latin's sake, though I must say that it does not become men, especially us who can boast of some education, to indulge too frequently or too long in potations of vinous liquors. By-the-way, Gulielme," continued he to Gray, who had made a few observations which we have not recorded, "you mispronounced a word, which I should have noticed on the instant, had not my impatience to imbibe a mouthful of this fermented beverage, made me forget the circumstance. Now the word to which I refer is one that we in the old countries (by *we* I mean people of erudition), especially in Edinburgh, or, to speak it in Latin, *urbs Edinburgum*—observe, I do not say the city *of* Edinburgh, because that is not correct, neither is it proper to say the city *of* New-York, or, in Latin, *Novum Eboricum*. I believe that I have hinted this to both of you before. Well, as I was about to observe—"

At this moment heavy steps were heard on the stairs, succeeded almost immediately by a loud rap at the room door.

"*Aperi ostium*," said M'Gregor, in answer to the summons, "or, in English (which I speak lest you may not understand the learned languages), open the door."

CHAPTER VII.

Two individuals, one a short and stout man, and the other a tall, raw-boned fellow, entered the apartment, and announced themselves to be officers of the police, come in search of Charles Vincent. Gray and M'Gregor, neither of whom was apprized of the reason of Charles's leaving the service of Wilmot & Co., were astonished at this announcement; but Vincent, although he had not the slightest reason to apprehend an arrest, manifested no surprise at this unlooked-for circumstance. A dead silence of some moments' duration succeeded, during which Vincent rose from the table, and, without uttering a syllable, began to make the necessary preparations for accompanying the constables, which he saw was inevitable, since these men were compelled to perform their duty, and had no power to do otherwise than conduct him to the office of the police. M'Gregor, having set down his glass of porter and pushed back his chair, looked through his eyeglass, first at the officers and then at Vincent, utterly at a loss to know how to account for this strange proceeding. Gray was struck completely dumb; and if he was astonished to see his friend arrested by thief-catchers, he was not less surprised at the prompt yet quiet manner in which Vincent prepared himself to go

with them, without even inquiring the nature of the crime for which he was arrested.

From the moment the men made their appearance, Vincent was satisfied that the forgery had come to the knowledge of the police, and he felt certain that Brown had taken this method of destroying his character, and involving him in inextricable difficulties. Positive of this, and also desirous of concealing from his friends the cause of his arrest, he avoided any inquiry concerning that which he already knew, and went immediately about arranging his books and wardrobe, in a manner indicating a supposition that he might be absent a long time.

It was apparent that the constables were somewhat surprised at the readiness with which he prepared to comply with their requisition; for they had evidently expected the same sort of deportment generally displayed by criminals at such moments. They did not know whether to regard his silence and collectedness as evidence of innocence, or as proof of a hardened villany, not to be disturbed in the least degree, even by the presence of ministers of the law. Their subsequent conduct, however, and the unusual respect they manifested for their prisoner, showed that they entertained doubts about his guilt; otherwise they would not have scrupled to hurry him off very unceremoniously, and with that small attention to the feelings of the accused which characterizes the proceedings of such men on like occasions.

After a short pause, Gray was the first to break silence. "What means this?" said he, addressing the elder of the two officers.

"Ay, what meaneth this intrusion, friends?" said M'Gregor, still holding his glass to his eye, and walking towards the men.

"Our business," replied the officer to whom these interrogatories were directed, "is with Mr. Charles Vincent; I believe it is—yes, the warrant says Charles Vincent. I take it that's he, according to the description of his person given to me; and if he wants to know why we call for him, let him step into the entry and I'll tell him. There's no use in blabbing the whole thing yet, for, curse me, if I don't believe there's some mistake in this business."

"Yes, gentlemen," said Vincent, locking his trunk, "I am the person you seek, and I know, as well as if you had told me, on what charge I am arrested. I shall be ready to accompany you in a few minutes. I am accused, my friends," he continued, addressing himself to M'Gregor and Gray, "of a great crime; one that obliged me to ask the shelter of this roof, but of which, though appearances are against me, I am as innocent as either of you. Gray, you will understand who is at the bottom of this matter, when I say it is he whom I met this morning over the river."

"Damn him!" exclaimed Gray; "Vincent, how can I assist you?"

"Ay, *et Ego, Carole, quid possim agere?* what can I do, my dear?" asked the old man, bustling

about the room, and making some changes in his dress with a view of attending Vincent to the police office; "*O miserum adolescentem!*"

"Alas! Gray, I hardly know how you can serve me in this emergency," said Charles, mournfully, "unless it be by immediately calling on Mr. Wilmot, and requesting him to meet me at the office."

"That I will do forthwith," said Gray; "and I will be with you again in fifteen minutes."

"Ay, go, Gulielme, go, that's a good boy, and I will accompany Carolus as soon as I shall have exchanged these clothes for others more beseeming. *Amice!* why do you trouble this youth? *Fecit tibi nullam injuriam*, or, to put the same in English (which tongue, though a good one, is in many respects inferior to the Roman), he never did you an injury."

"Very true, my friend," said the officer, civilly; "he never did me any harm, nor do I know that he has injured anybody; but my duty is chalked out for me, and I must perform it, however disagreeable it may be to you and to him, as well as to me. If he is innocent, as I hope he is, of the crime they say he committed, why then it'll be a tough matter for his accusers to make a case against him. So, keep a good heart, Mr. Vincent; it's easy enough to charge a crime upon a man, but the main thing is to keep it there by proof. If you are innocent, there's no danger; but if you are guilty, why the game's up with you, that's all. But I'll say this much, that if you did do what they say you did, it's

no use after this in trusting too much in an honest face. Now I've seen all sorts of men in my time, and I always flattered myself that I could tell a rogue as soon as I clapped eyes on his face. There's a something or other about the expression of his phiz, that an honest man hasn't got, by which I know him right off, let him be where he will."

"But I cannot divine," said M'Gregor, putting on his cravat, "what they wish to do with my friend Carolus. I can answer for his being one of the most staid, sober, and upright young men in this wicked city; and I know that he abominates evil of all kind, and cannot, therefore, be justly chargeable with any offence against the law. Besides, he is well-grounded in the Latin; a language, by-the-way, which is not studied so thoroughly in this, as it is in the old country, by reason of the strong disposition to accumulate this world's goods."

"Well, now, that's what I said," observed the officer.

"Friend, I did not hear you say anything of the kind," replied M'Gregor; "for Carolus's character, as well as his scholarship, could not have been known to you."

"I didn't say that I know'd his character, but that—"

"Friend, one moment, if you please. I must correct an error in your language. The imperfect tense of the verb *To know*, is *knew*, and not *knowed*, which is only used by those who have never studied the grammar of their vernacular tongue. Your ex-

498828

pression would, therefore, have been faultless, and, consequently, not obnoxious to the critic's censure, had you said I *knew* his character, instead of I *knowed* his character. Please to bear this in mind, officer; and if you desire to pursue the study of English grammar, I recommend the excellent work of Lindley Murray, which may be purchased, at a reasonable price, from any of our bibliopoles. Or perchance you yearn for a knowledge of the Roman tongue, or the *lingua Latina*, as we scholars call it. If so, you should procure a copy (it costs but a few *asses* or cents) of Ruddiman's Rudiments, and then—"

"Mr. Vincent is ready, sir," said the officer, turning towards the door, and laughing at the old man's pedantry.

"Go on, then," replied M'Gregor, taking from a peg a large straw hat, which he was accustomed to wear in winter as well as in summer, and seizing his umbrella, without which he never went from home, however short the distance, and whatever might be the state of the weather. It served him the purpose of a walking-cane in dry weather, and when it rained or snowed he was never without protection.

As they walked along the streets M'Gregor was an object of great curiosity to the officers, who confessed that they had "never seen the like of him before." His snuff-coloured coat, cut somewhat after the style of those worn by our good friends the Quakers, reached to his ankles; while

two huge silver buckles, once so common in this country, garnished his shoes; these, together with his long vest, his brown velvet breeches, and immense hat, the rim of which turned up three inches above the crown, gave him an exceedingly antiquated appearance, and caused him *monstrari digito* (to use a phrase frequently in his mouth) whenever he went into the street.

On their arrival at the police-office they found it filled with people, who had rushed in with a person just arrested for assault and battery; and Vincent was therefore conducted into a small room adjoining the main one, to await the disposal of the case then under examination. In about ten minutes the office was cleared, and Charles, attended by M'Gregor and the two officers, was taken before the justice. This dignitary, after scrutinizing very closely the prisoner's countenance, began to turn over some papers in search of that containing a memorandum of the charge on which Vincent had been brought before him. He then stated in effect, that information had been lodged at the office concerning the recent forgery of a check on the —— Bank, purporting to have been drawn by the head of the house Wilmot & Co., by means of which, the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars had been fraudulently obtained, a part whereof had been found in the wallet of one Charles Vincent, at the time a clerk in the employ of that firm; and that other evidence, in the possession of Mr. Wray, the junior partner, might be had to sustain this

charge. Having read the notes taken down from the lips of the accuser, the justice proceeded to ask Charles a few questions, among which were the following:

"Young man, is your name Charles Vincent?"

"It is," replied Charles.

"Were you, a few days since, a clerk in the house of Wilmot & Co.?"

"I was."

"Do you know anything of the crime of which you are accused of being the perpetrator?"

"I have been informed that a forgery was committed a short time since, but of that crime I am as innocent as an unborn babe."

"Have you been suspected of this crime, so far as you know?"

"Certain circumstances, which appeared suspicious, induced a gentleman belonging to the firm to accuse me of having committed the forgery, but he subsequently withdrew the charge."

"Who was the gentleman to whom you allude?"

"It was Mr. Wray."

"That is the name of the individual who is herein named as the possessor of evidence against you."

"It is the same."

"Was not your wallet examined by Mr. Wray?"

"It was."

"Did he find part of the money which had been fraudulently drawn from the bank?"

"He certainly found a hundred-dollar note; but

whether it had been drawn by the forged check or not, I cannot say."

"Did you account satisfactorily for the possession of that bill?"

"I did not."

Here a tittering was heard among the officers and the few spectators who had been allowed to remain in the room to hear the examination.

"Why did you not?"

"Because I could not."

"Yet you assert your innocence, in the face of this acknowledged possession of money which you cannot explain how you came by; and which, there appears to be good ground for believing, was the identical money drawn from the bank with the forged check. Is it so?"

"Strange as it may appear to you, I most solemnly aver that I am guiltless of the crime imputed to me; admitting, at the same time, that money not belonging to me was found in my pocket-book, and which, for aught I know, may have been part of the twenty-five hundred dollars drawn with the forged check. Nay, I will go so far as to say, that I feel confident of its being one of the identical bills."

"I think you are safe in doing so," said the justice, laughing, in which he was accompanied by all present, excepting M'Gregor.

"*Quid rides?*" said the old man; "or, in English, why are you so merry?"

This interrogatory drew every eye upon the

scholar, whose odd exterior, connected with the question he had just put, and the earnest expression of his countenance, was perfectly irresistible, and produced a loud laugh of some minutes' continuance.

"We have not time, old gentleman, to answer you now," said the justice, wiping the tears from his eyes, "for we have more important business on hand."

"Vincent," continued the justice, "your affected candour will avail you nothing. We understand these matters too well here, not to see through your object in so frankly admitting what it would be useless to deny."

"I had no object in view," replied Vincent, "other than to assert my innocence in the face of such facts as, I am aware, will justify you in committing me for trial. I look for nothing else from you, whose duty is plain: my defence must be made at another time and place."

This unexpected remark rather abashed the learned justice, who had given himself credit for more penetration than he really possessed, and who had so grievously misapprehended Vincent's purpose in making the observation that had occasioned so much merriment.

"You are right, young man," said the justice; "I should be justifiable in committing you for trial on the confession you have made; but as there is other evidence within our reach, I shall consider it my duty to hear it before sending your case to the

district attorney, to be laid by him before the grand jury. The officers will now conduct you to prison, and to-morrow morning I shall cause you to be brought before me again."

"I have one request to make before I go," said Vincent.

"What is it?" asked the justice.

"That you will furnish me with a copy of the accusation contained on the paper before you."

"I see nothing unreasonable in your request. You shall have one. Clerk, make a copy and give it to him."

This was soon done; and, after Charles had received the paper, he asked the justice whether his accuser had really made all the statements therein contained, or whether a part of it had been obtained from another source.

"Only one individual has been before me on this subject," replied the justice; "and all the information we have touching your case, was given by him in the very language contained in this document. I myself wrote it, and can, therefore, assure you of its correctness."

"Have you any objection to giving me the name of my accuser?" asked Vincent.

Before this question could be answered, the doors of the office were opened, and two constables, leading a man detected in robbing a store, came in, followed by a large number of people, who soon filled the room. Vincent was taken out by a side door and conducted to prison. M'Gregor followed him

thither, but, on their arrival at the entrance, Charles begged him to go home and give himself no farther trouble on his account. As it was then late in the evening, the kind old man consented to take his leave, which he did almost in silence; being unable, in consequence of his emotions, to do more than shake his pupil by the hand, and utter imperfectly the word *vale.*

Charles then asked a particular favour of the officers: it was, that, instead of thrusting him into a room with other prisoners, they would assign to him a separate cell. This was readily granted; and one of the constables, who, as we have seen, manifested some feeling for Vincent, expressed himself happy to oblige him. The two officers then withdrew, having promised Charles to send him a light, with pen, ink, and paper; and to request the keeper to admit any friend that might call during the evening or in the morning.

Not many minutes elapsed before the heavy door opened and Gray entered, out of breath from having run the whole distance to the town residence of Mr. Wilmot, thence to that of Mr. Wray, and thence to the prison, only stopping for a moment at the police-office, to make some inquiries concerning his friend.

"You have given yourself a vast deal of trouble on my account, my dear sir," said Vincent, "for which I can only offer you my thanks, the power of doing more at present, having, as you perceive, been taken from me by the sovereign people."

"Don't speak of thanks now, my good friend, for we must devise the ways and means to extricate you from this awkward business. First of all, however, if you have no objection, tell me all about this matter from the beginning; what crime you are charged with having committed, and why suspicion fastened itself upon you."

"I will soon put you in possession of all the circumstances," said Vincent; "and when I shall have done so, you will entertain strong doubts of my innocence; for such is the nature of the evidence adduced in support of the accusation, that, to say the truth, I could almost swear to my own guilt."

Charles proceeded to give his friend a history of his visits to Beechwood and to Saratoga, and then narrated all the particulars connected with the crime, for the alleged commission of which, he was now incarcerated in a loathsome prison. He did not omit to notice the extraordinary conduct of the junior partner, and stated his full belief that Mr. Wray was sincere in the expression of his regret at what had occurred. He also repeated the substance of the conversations he had held with both partners on this subject, since the moment he was informed of the forgery, and then put into Gray's hands the copy of the notes taken by the justice from the lips of the accuser.

After attentively studying the paper for a few moments, Gray observed, "If I understand you rightly, Vincent, Mr. Wilmot and Mr. Wray were the only two individuals present at your examination. This

being the case, I think I see precisely how you are to get out of this difficulty with perfect ease; but I must first see those gentlemen before I can decide whether this paper is of any value or not. I shall make it a point to call upon them as early as possible to-morrow; meanwhile, you should not give way to discouragement, but endeavour to keep up your spirits, and hope for a speedy deliverance."

"But for that paper, I should find it hard to regard myself otherwise than as a person destined for the state prison. Did you see Mr. Wilmot?"

"I did not," replied Gray; "but learned that he left at five o'clock for Beechwood. Mr. Wray was also absent; and I was informed that, about an hour since, he went away in a hack, leaving word that business had suddenly called him out of town, but that he should certainly return early to-morrow morning. My own opinion is, that, having been notified of your arrest, and summoned to be present at your examination, he has gone posthaste for Mr. Wilmot, who might otherwise remain some days at his country residence. I think, therefore, you may rely on seeing both of them before the hour appointed for your appearance at the police-office. I will now leave you, Vincent, but depend upon my exerting every nerve in your behalf."

Vincent was now left to his own reflections; and, bitter as they were, he had one source of consolation—the consciousness of innocence. There was one point of view, however, in which his present position looked exceedingly unfavourable. It was

likely to fix such a stain upon his name, even though he should be acquitted, as, in the event of his being discharged, to prevent his retaining the situation of copyist which he had that day obtained. Immersed as he was in difficulties, and strong as was the probability that, unless one clause in the writing he had received from the justice possessed the consequence he was inclined to give it, he would, on the following day, be committed for trial, yet he bore this unexpected turn of fortune with the fortitude of a powerful and well-disciplined mind. In a few minutes after the departure of Gray, Charles was soundly asleep, dreaming perhaps of romantic Beechwood, and of its attractions both natural and artificial. Of the former, Clara must, of course, be considered as chief.

CHAPTER VIII.

About eight o'clock next morning, Gray called and found Charles in good spirits. "I am glad, Vincent," said he, "to find you looking as if you had slept well."

"I never had a better night's rest in my life," replied Vincent; "but if any person, two weeks since, had told me that, within a fortnight, I would not only be immured as a prisoner within the walls of a prison, but that I would also pass the first night as comfortably, both corporally and mentally, as if nothing strange had occurred, I should probably have considered him insane. Yet such a prophecy, you see, would have been literally fulfilled."

"You have certainly shown yourself to be a true philosopher," observed Gray, "'What can't be cured,' says the old saw, 'must be endured.'"

"That proverb was on my lips last night," said Vincent. "There are two particulars, however, in which I have departed from my usual custom."

"What are they?" asked Gray.

"One is," said Vincent; "that I have not yet taken my morning walk, and the other has reference to my toilet, which, though I am no dandy, I have invariably made with some care, previously to seeing my friends."

"The first," replied Gray, "I fear you must dispense with to-day, in consequence of the rain; but as to the matter of washing, shaving, and combing, I will endeavour to procure all the necessary materials from our good-humoured friend, the turnkey. As you are to appear before the public this morning in a new character, you must, of course, feel anxious to look well, at least."

"Certainly," said Charles, smiling; "my appearance should be in harmony with the character I am to assume, or, rather, the character which has been forced upon me by our unknown manager, contrary to my most earnest wishes."

"I hope," replied Gray, "that he will not long remain unknown; but at present, for some very good reason, he seems disposed to keep behind the scenes. Let him beware, however, lest we hoist the curtain at a most inconvenient season, and expose him to the hisses and groans of the audience."

"The day will come, sooner or later, in which he will act the part that has been assigned to me, and do it more naturally too, since the character to be depicted is all his own. The representation will be for the benefit of the chief performer. But, dropping our theatrical similes, let us see what is now to be done."

"*Radere, et lavare*, as our old pedantic friend would say," observed Gray; "the which to do requires things which I will incontinently furnish, even should it be necessary to lug hither my own toilet apparatus."

"That would be useless trouble," replied Charles; "for this half dollar may easily be converted into a razor, soap, water, and towel, by simply placing it into the palm of our worthy keeper, and, at the same time, pronouncing the names of those articles of luxury, indispensable even in a prison, with a charge of forgery resting upon one's head."

"I will try the experiment," said Gray; "and should I be successful, I will call immediately at Mr. Wilmot's, and afterward at Mr. Wray's. You will see me here again, barring accidents, at nine o'clock. Adieu."

Gray called the turnkey, and made his exit into the street, having first requested that important personage to supply his prisoner with what he desired, and made sure of compliance by tickling his hand with a piece of silver.

In a few minutes Charles's keeper came in. "The gentleman bade me get you these things," said he, laying down the basin, towel, et cetera; "and here they are. I hope, sir, you'll find them to your liking."

"I dare say I shall, Master Turnkey," replied Vincent; "and I am much obliged to you for the loan of them. Do you know, my good sir, that you have it in your power to bestow a much greater favour?"

"How, sir?" asked the knight of the keys.

"By allowing me to take a turn in the Park."

"Ha, ha, ha! that wouldn't do exactly. I should soon find myself in the Park, with a walking-ticket in my pocket."

"It's very strange," said Vincent, preparing his lather, "that you should take pleasure in keeping me here in this narrow cell, when you must be aware that confinement, particularly in warm weather, can hardly be endured."

"It's no pleasure to me, I assure you, to turn the key on a good-looking young fellow like you; but it's a part of my duty, and there's no getting away from it, much as it goes agin the grain. All I can do is to say to you, as I said to Dick Smith, who was hung last year for murder, you must grin and bear it. By-the-way, Smith occupied this very cell, and was what they call a whole-souled fellow; but that didn't save his bacon. I hope your neck's in no danger."

"No, no, my good friend," replied Charles, laughing; "let matters turn out as badly as they may, I believe my neck is safe, thanks to the lawgivers of this state."

"Well, I'm right glad to hear that, for I was afraid that them crows, the doctors, had a mortgage on your carcass. The devil take those fellows; they'd rather tear a man to pieces than eat, any time. They got hold of Dick Smith as soon as he was cut down, and before he was cold, poor fellow, they clapped galvanism (I believe they call it) on him, and put him in such agony that he threw his arms and legs about like a crazy man. Then I was told they tore him limb from gut, and every one of them carried off a bit; but what they did with the pieces, Heaven only knows. Cursed

scamps, those fellows! and you may thank your stars, that the worst thing that can happen to you is, to go to the state prison for life."

"Why," said Vincent, highly amused by the man's remarks, "after a person is hung, it matters but little to him what becomes of his body."

"Ay, but it does, though; and I'll argue that point with you. Scripture tells us that our bodies, at some future time, are to be raised up again; and that—how is it?—corruption is to put on incorruption; you remember what it says?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, then, now I ask you how it's possible for any body to be got together again and raised, after it has been pulled, and mauled, and hashed up into mincemeat by the infernal doctors, and carried off to the four quarters of the globe? You might as well look for a needle in a haystack, or try to run up a tree feet foremost. This is unnatural, you may depend, and it's high time the Legislature put a stop to such rascally work."

At this moment a knocking was heard at the door, and on its being opened Messrs. Wilmot, Wray, and Gray entered. Mr. Wilmot's countenance betrayed the depth of his feeling for Vincent's unpleasant situation, while the junior partner, who said but little, was evidently much affected by the unfortunate turn which affairs had taken. Gray was still cheerful, and seemed to look for Charles's speedy discharge.

"You are indebted to me for this predicament,"

said Mr. Wray to Vincent, in a tone and manner strongly indicative of his sorrow for what he had done.

"You were actuated, however, by the best motives," replied the latter; "but the thing is done, and, whatever the result may be, I beg you to believe that I shall not remember, with any feelings of unkindness, your agency in bringing it about."

"But I never shall forgive myself. Is there nothing that I can do to save you?"

"I fear," said Mr. Wilmot, "that this will prove to be a very serious business. You, Mr. Wray, will doubtless be called upon to state what you know of the forgery; and, if you relate all the circumstances, as you will be obliged to do, under oath, your evidence will warrant Vincent's commitment for trial, and subsequent conviction by a jury of his peers. To that we can oppose his former excellent character, it is very true; but what can a good character avail him against facts?"

"Have you engaged counsel?" asked Wray of his partner.

"I have engaged two as good lawyers as the city affords; and, according to agreement, they should be here now. Ah, here they are."

The lawyers having entered the cell, Mr. Wilmot proceeded to state the whole matter to them; and when they were in possession of all the particulars, one of them regarded Vincent with a decidedly suspicious look, while the other shrugged his shoulders, and confessed that it would be no easy task to com-

bat such evidence successfully. The lawyers then went on the outside of the cell, and conferred together for nearly half an hour, at the end of which time, two constables came to conduct the prisoner to the police-office.

Gray was allowed to walk next to Vincent; and during their conversation he remarked, that, in the hour that he was absent, he had learned one or two highly important facts from Messrs. Wilmot and Wray, which, taken in connexion with one clause of the writing received from the justice, could not fail to fix suspicion in another quarter.

Vincent seemed to understand his meaning, for his countenance, which had been much sobered by the discouraging view of the case taken by Mr. Wilmot and the learned counsel, immediately brightened into a smile.

"Would it not be proper," he asked, "for you to show this paper to the lawyers, and make them acquainted with the facts you speak of?"

"I should have done so had time permitted, and I shall either communicate with them when we get to the office, or I will myself lay the facts before the justice. It's not important that they should do it, for I am something of a pleader, having more than once spoken in behalf of others before that dignitary."

When they arrived at the police-room, they found it nearly filled with people, listening to the examination of an interesting case; and the officers were about to conduct Vincent to the small adjoining

chamber, when the justice suspended the proceedings then in progress, and commanded silence. As soon as the noise had ceased, he stood up and said, "Officers, have you brought in Mr. Charles Vincent?"

"We have, sir," replied one; "he is here."

"Let him be discharged," said the justice. "Mr. Vincent, you are at liberty."

The constables now commanded a passage to be opened to the door, through which Charles and his friends passed out of the room without difficulty. When they reached the porch, each gentleman shook Vincent by the hand, and congratulated him upon his unexpected deliverance; and he, in his turn, thanked them for the deep interest they had manifested in his behalf.

"What can the meaning of this be?" asked Mr. Wilmot of one of the attorneys.

"I am unable to explain," replied the lawyer.

"It seems to me," said Mr. Wilmot, "to be a very strange proceeding, that a man should be arrested on so serious a charge, held in durance vile a whole night, and on the following day discharged without a word of explanation."

"I inquired of the justice," remarked the other attorney, "what had occurred to relieve this young gentleman from the suspicion that had rested upon him; and his reply was, that he was not then at liberty to give a satisfactory answer to the question, but that he was happy to assure me of his belief in

Mr. Vincent's innocence of the deed ascribed to him."

"I congratulate you," said one of the constables, "upon being let off so easily and so soon. I told you last night, that, when I see a man's phiz, I can tell whether he is a villain or an honest man."

"You were certainly correct in my case," said Vincent, "and I thank you for the good opinion you so early expressed of my character."

Mr. Wray and the attorneys now took leave; and Mr. Wilmot, after a few moments of private conversation with Vincent, went away in the direction of his counting-house. Charles and Gray, being left together, walked leisurely through the Park, and then turned off towards the narrow street in which stood the humble dwelling of M'Gregor.

They entered the house, and went up stairs upon tiptoe, so as not to disturb the old man's meditations; but this they soon found to be unnecessary, as he had already gone out, probably to visit Vincent in prison.

"I must confess," said Gray, seating himself, "that I had little expectation two hours ago of so soon visiting this room in your company. I did not doubt, it is true, that you would ultimately be acquitted, but I scarce allowed myself to hope that you would escape commitment for trial; so confident was I that, what was already known to the police, and the additional information to be derived from Mr. Wray, would warrant the grand jury in indicting you."

"You are not more surprised to see me here than I am," said Vincent, throwing up the window to admit the fresh breeze; "for, when I left this chamber last evening, I felt as if the hour had come for me to bid adieu to liberty, to the world, and to everything near and dear to me. I saw no avenue of escape, nor did any ray of hope cheer my bosom, till the justice read the paper sworn to by my unknown accuser."

"What circumstance procured your discharge, think you?" demanded Gray.

"I cannot imagine," replied Vincent. "Of one thing, however, I am perfectly satisfied; which is, that Brown is the individual who lodged information at the police-office concerning the forgery."

"There can be little doubt of that," said Gray; "and I suspect it was he that withdrew the charge, after repenting of what he had done."

"But how could he do that, after having sworn to the truth of what he stated to the justice?" asked Vincent.

"I cannot say how it was managed," replied Gray; "but that he has been the chief actor in this business, both for and against you, I feel perfectly assured. The probability is, that he went to the police under strong excitement arising from your late hostile intercourse, and that farther reflection showed him the great danger he would incur, by allowing you to remain in custody. If he committed or was privy to the commission of the forgery, his efforts to blast your character would certainly have

resulted in his own ruin. This he could not fail to perceive, and hence your unexpected discharge."

"It is quite likely you are correct," said Vincent.

"How would you like to turn the tables, and cause Brown to be arrested?" inquired Gray.

"I do not think it could be done. Though I am perfectly satisfied of his privity to the crime, yet I do not know that we are in possession of a single circumstance, on which an accusation could be grounded."

"You forget the paper received from the justice," said Gray. "Mr. Wilmot and Mr. Wray both assured me, that they had mentioned to no individual the fact of your having been charged with the deed; and that no person, so far as they knew, was aware that you had even been suspected of guilt. This being the case, it is evident that your accuser, whoever he was, knew not only that there was a bank-note for a hundred dollars in your wallet, but that it would be searched for, and found on your examination."

"This is certainly a circumstance in my favour," replied Charles; "and one that I should have made a good use of, had I been committed for trial; but how can it be turned against Brown?"

"Who so likely as he to be the guilty person?"

"None. We are satisfied, but that is not sufficient."

"The person who informed against you, be he Brown or anybody else, is the villain who either committed the crime, or was an accessory before

the deed; since he there disclosed to the justice an important fact, which could only be known to the forger, to those aiding and abetting him, and to Messrs. Wilmot and Wray. Let us boldly accuse the informer, and, my word for it, Richard Brown will prove to be he who should have slept on the pallet you last night occupied."

"I should be sorry," said Charles, after reflecting a short time, "to do anything calculated to displease Mr. Wilmot; and I am certain that it would cause him much pain to hear of any proceedings of that kind against his nephew, in whose welfare, of course, he feels a deep interest. The many obligations that gentleman has laid me under, will prevent my taking any part in the course you suggest; but you are at liberty to act as you please in this matter, without reference to my wish or to his."

"Allow me to ask what your wish is?"

"That, for Mr. Wilmot's sake, no steps should be taken by either of us against Brown."

"Let it be so, then," replied Gray; "but I must take the freedom to say, that, were I similarly circumstanced, I should not hesitate to do all in my power to bring the guilty wretch to condign punishment. But, as this is your affair, I am content that you should take Brown under your protection. I shall be agreeably disappointed, however, if he do not soon play you another trick."

Vincent and Gray continued to converse for nearly two hours, and were still engaged in earnest conversation, when the latter, who was sitting by the

window, perceived Mr. Wilmot in the street apparently in search of M'Gregor's house. Vincent ran down immediately, and conducted his friend up stairs into his humble chamber. Mr. Wilmot, on entering the room, cast a look of surprise about him, and was evidently much affected at the discovery of Charles's straitened circumstances, as indicated by the wretched appearance of his new abode. For a few moments he remained in silent contemplation of the interior of this apartment, and then observed, "Is it possible, Charles, that you have made this place your home?"

"For the present it is," replied Vincent; "but I expect to have another a little more to my taste in a few days."

"May I ask, Charles, whether you have yet obtained any employment?"

"I have secured the situation of copyist in the office of an eminent advocate of this city. I shall enter upon my duties this afternoon."

"I am rejoiced to hear it," said Mr. Wilmot; "for I could not be satisfied to have you remain here permanently."

"I should have been perfectly contented while it corresponded with my circumstances; but I did not expect to tax the generosity of my friend M'Gregor longer than necessity required."

A pause here ensued, during which Vincent thought he discovered in Mr. Wilmot's countenance the evidence of injured feeling, arising from the fact that he, in his reduced condition, had chosen to ask

a favour of M'Gregor, rather than avail himself of Mr. Wilmot's offer of aid whenever it might be required.

"Can you inform me, sir," inquired Charles, "how this matter came to the knowledge of the police?"

"I cannot," replied Mr. Wilmot; "I was much astonished on being told that you had been arrested, supposing that no person knew you were suspected, excepting Mr. Wray, my nephew, and the officers of the bank."

"I think it is not difficult to guess correctly," said Vincent.

"You suspect Brown of having done it, do you not?"

"I do. There is no other individual whom we know to have been cognizant of the affair, excepting the bank men; and I do not believe they would have reported the case to the police, contrary to your express wishes, reimbursed, as they have been, by your generosity."

"It was no person connected with the bank: of that I am perfectly satisfied. Neither do I believe that Brown did it, for he left the city yesterday at ten o'clock, and it was not till past noon that the forgery was known to the police. It is within my knowledge, that, at the moment your accuser appeared at the office, my nephew was at Beechwood."

"It is very strange," said Charles.

"Might he not," asked Gray, "have employed

some person to convey the information to the police?"

"Such a thing is barely possible," replied Mr. Wilmot; "yet I do not believe it, because I know how he was occupied from six o'clock till the moment of his leaving town. I was with him almost constantly during that time. Independently of this, I cannot suppose that Brown is base enough to act such a part against one who had so long been his friend and fellow-clerk. Making every allowance for the irritation of his feelings, caused by the unfortunate quarrel, I do not think he would permit his anger to lead him into the commission of a deed that might hurry Vincent into irretrievable ruin. He has always respected you, Charles; and, though you are now estranged, yet I am sure that towards you he would not be guilty of an act of this kind."

An incredulous smile played about the lips of Gray, as he stood, with his hat in his hand, waiting only the conclusion of Mr. Wilmot's remark to take his leave. When he had gone, Charles and his friend continued their conversation.

CHAPTER IX.

"In calling upon you this morning," said Mr. Wilmot, "I had two objects in view; the first, to inquire whether you had a situation of any kind in prospect; the second, to advise you (for to do this I feel that I have still a right) against being drawn into another contest with my nephew. From what he yesterday told me, I infer that he is not satisfied to let the matter rest in its present position; and you will, therefore, probably hear from him again in a very few days. Now, for your own sake as well as his, I desire to prevent another meeting; and I cannot feel assured of peace between you, unless you give me a promise that you will not, under any circumstances, gratify him in this particular."

"To that I have no objection," replied Vincent; "and I now say to you, that I will have nothing more to do with him unless he should use personal violence; in which case, of course, I should be obliged to defend myself. I shall, doubtless, subject myself to the imputation of cowardice, by refusing the satisfaction which the world will accord him the right to demand; but I will cheerfully comply with any request coming from you, whatever sacrifice of feeling such compliance may cost me."

"Thank you for that promise," said Mr. Wilmot.

"I will now tell you what has occurred since I saw you at Hoboken yesterday morning."

"First be so good as to inform me," said Vincent, "by what means you became aware that a duel was to take place."

"I was told so by a young man, who said that you had requested him to stand your friend on the occasion. He added, that he had declined in consequence of his aversion to the practice, and that he felt it to be a duty he owed to you and to society at large, to notify me of the contemplated meeting in time to prevent mischief."

"Brown charged me with cowardice, and alleged that your going thither was procured by me, in order to avert the danger which he imagined I was afraid to meet."

"I know that he suspected you," replied Mr. Wilmot, "of having indirectly given me the requisite information, with a view to secure my interference; but I set him right on this point."

"It matters not to me what he and his friends think of my courage," said Vincent; "but I would not have them suppose that I was instrumental in bringing you to the ground, in order not only to escape danger, but to involve Brown in difficulty with you."

"I was particular to acquaint him with the source of my information; but he affected to believe that the young man called upon me at your instance."

"Since the truth has been told to him, it is imma-

terial to me what he now believes. Pray go on with what you were about to say."

"I returned to the counting-house at nine o'clock," said Mr. Wilmot, "and, in obedience to my command, Brown made his appearance at the appointed hour. He was sullen and morose, more so than I had ever before seen him. As soon as I entered, he asked me, in a manner less respectful than he had been accustomed to observe, the nature of the business on which I desired to speak. I replied, that it must be as well known to him as to me, that my design in having a private interview with him, was to demand an explanation of the extraordinary business in which I found him engaged. He said that he did not acknowledge my right to make such a demand, and that he should decline giving me any satisfaction concerning the contemplated duel. 'I have the right,' he continued, 'to manage my own affairs in my own way, and I may as well now begin to act independently of your wishes, for I will no longer submit to be called to account for any conduct of mine, that may not exactly accord with your ideas of propriety.'

"'This language, Richard,' said I, 'would justify me in discarding you for ever; but you are now in a foolish passion, and have given utterance to words of which, I feel assured, that, in your calmer moments, you will repent. I shall, therefore, make some allowance for the state of your feelings, and not permit myself to take offence at your impertinence. If you should not, however, before the lapse

of twenty-four hours, apologize for what you have said, I shall be much disappointed in your character.'

"'I meant no disrespect,' he observed; 'I only intended to express myself decidedly and firmly in reference to the course I design to pursue. I have now been kept in leading-strings as long as I ought, and I have cheerfully submitted to your authority since the period that I was placed under your control. The time has now arrived when I can no longer be governed by any other than my own will; and from this moment I shall consider myself entirely free from restraint.'

"'Do you mean,' said I, 'to be understood as relinquishing your place in the counting-house?'

"'I do,' he replied. 'In fortune I am independent, and it is more than folly for me to spend my time in assisting others in their business, without profit to myself.'

"'It has not,' said I, 'been wholly without profit to you, since, during the last three years, I have allowed you a salary such as no other clerk of your age in my employ, receives. Besides this, it was my intention, at the proper time, to make you a partner of the house, giving you a share of the profits equal to that enjoyed by Mr. Wray.'

"'I thank you,' he said, 'for your liberal views concerning me, but I cannot avail myself of them, for the reason that my mind is fully made up to have nothing more to do with mercantile affairs.'

"After conversing for more than half an hour,

during which I made such comments on his extraordinary conduct as my duty required me to do, he rose in anger, and declared that he would not remain another day under my roof. I made no attempt to alter this rash resolution, for I clearly perceived that it was not a sudden determination; indeed, he gave me to understand that he had, months ago, resolved to quit our house, and pursue no business of any kind. My reply was, simply, that I left him free to act according to the dictates of his own judgment.

"In about an hour, he set off for Beechwood to bring away his clothes, books, and other things, stopping at Jenks's to acquaint them with the circumstances of the forgery. To my wife and daughter he also gave an account of it, not omitting to state that suspicion had fallen upon you, and that out of your subsequent conduct had sprung his present necessity of quitting my house and my employ. For a reason which I need not name, Mrs. Wilmot became exceedingly incensed against you, and vainly endeavoured to persuade Brown to abandon his purpose. When I arrived at Beechwood, my nephew was gone; and the moment I perceived the effect produced by his story, I spared no pains to do you ample justice, by giving a correct and impartial history of all the circumstances attending the forgery, so far as they are known to me; and also of your misunderstanding with Brown, up to the moment that I came on the ground at Hoboken. I am sorry to say, however, that my counter-state-

ment did not serve to change Mrs. Wilmot's opinion of the part you have played. She still ascribes her nephew's ruin, as she terms it, to your efforts to supplant him in my estimation. I mention this fact by way of explaining the request that I am going to make, which is, that you will not, for the present, avail yourself of the invitation I gave you, to go to Beechwood whenever you should feel inclined. I cannot answer for your reception by Mrs. Wilmot, while her feelings towards you remain the same as they now are. It pains me to see that she has so soon forgotten the debt of gratitude we owe you, for the preservation of our beloved daughter; but I trust that, in a little time, she will take a different view of this matter, and perceive that your conduct, save that part which relates to the duel, is far less censurable than she is disposed to allow."

In the afternoon of the same day Charles went to the office of Mr. Eldredge (for that was the advocate's name), and commenced his duties among five or six well-dressed young men, who received him as a fellow-clerk in a manner which, he thought, augured favourably for the future. Each of them, in the course of the day, made it a point to speak to him, and all seemed desirous to place him, in the office, entirely at his ease. The advocate had anticipated the newspaper notice of the feat which had introduced Vincent to his acquaintance, and had given a detailed narrative of the affair, with a view, perhaps, of producing an impression in Vincent's favour. All the daily papers contained long

paragraphs concerning the rescue, as they termed it, and spoke so flatteringly of his courage and complete success, that the writers in the office naturally felt curious to see and converse with him. The advocate himself received him with marks of favour; and, during the afternoon, requested another visit to his family the same evening; an invitation wholly unexpected by Charles, and one which he did not hesitate immediately to accept.

Among the students in the office was one whom Vincent was no less pleased than surprised to see. It was the young man he had met so opportunely at Hoboken, and who had given him a card of address bearing the name Duval. The desk assigned to Vincent being remote from that occupied by his new friend, few opportunities for conversation were afforded them during office hours, without the one going directly to the other, and thus interfering with the business of both. Before the first day expired, however, they had snatched a few moments from their tasks to converse a little on ordinary subjects; and both expressed the pleasure they felt in thus becoming inmates of the same office, with the prospect of being able to cultivate the acquaintance begun under circumstances somewhat extraordinary.

Vincent did not fail to notice that his friend was much paler than when he saw him at Hoboken; appearing as if he was just recovering from a severe indisposition, only that the change was confined to his countenance, which looked haggard and careworn. This was the more surprising to Vincent,

because the time was so very short since he had seen him in comparatively good health, and with spirits far more buoyant than they were at the period of which we are speaking. His expression was extremely sad; and an occasional sigh convinced Vincent that, if his friend were not indisposed, something weighed heavily on his mind. In reply to an interrogatory regarding his health, he observed that he was perfectly well, but that, for some days, he had been labouring under a degree of mental uneasiness, concerning a matter interesting only to himself. He then made a remark or two on another subject, but Vincent immediately recurred to the one which the student seemed averse to dwelling upon, and offered, if his distress were susceptible of alleviation from the service of a friend, to render him all the assistance in his power. Duval simply thanked him for his kindness, and added, that, on some future occasion, he might, perhaps, take the freedom to speak at length on the subject which caused his unhappiness, and which would require more time than his duties would then allow him to bestow.

In the evening Charles went to the advocate's, and spent a few hours very agreeably in chatting with the young lady, who received him in such a manner as might have inspired him with feelings of a peculiar kind, had not the image of another prevented his thinking of the charming Miss Eldredge, as of one whom it was possible he could ever love. Calculated as she was, in all respects, to excite the

tender passion, his heart was too much devoted to one, from whose possession it could not be wrested, to be in any danger from the powerful assaults to which it was then subjected.

The advocate, having some business in the office requiring his inspection, left the family for a short time; and Mrs. Eldredge's attention being soon occupied by the arrival of two or three neighbours, the young lady and Vincent were left together in the back parlour, seated near the open window. Mr. Eldredge, jun., the sporting dandy, was with them a while; but, becoming weary of conversation so ill adapted to his capacity, he framed an excuse and withdrew.

This was a situation in which Charles had very rarely found himself; and, consequently, for the first half hour, he was not sufficiently at ease to appreciate the felicity of a *tête-à-tête* with a beautiful young woman, already inclined to regard him with favourable eyes. If we mistake not, we have observed, that his devotion to study had consumed much of the leisure time which less studious young men give to ladies' society; and as there were in the house in which he resided none but women considerably advanced in life, he had seldom enjoyed the conversation of any females near his own age, excepting when he left his studies and called upon them at their own residences. This was of very rare occurrence, for his circle of acquaintance, as we have before remarked, was limited. Hence

the temporary feeling which approached what the French denominate *mauvaise honte.*

Vincent's trepidation was of very short duration; for, besides that Miss Eldredge's peculiar manners, assumed for the purpose of placing him at ease, soon inspired him with confidence, his good sense showed him the folly of being otherwise than self-possessed in the presence of a lady, with whom he was so well qualified to converse in a creditable style. But a short time elapsed before he was as much composed as if his charming companion had been his most intimate friend; and then he exerted his colloquial powers with such effect, as astonished himself quite as much as it did the young lady. Naturally taciturn, he did not know till then of what he was capable; and it was a source of pleasure to him, as it certainly was to his fair auditor, to dilate on subjects which, ordinarily, he would have despatched with a single remark. Nor did the lady evince talents of a much inferior order. She talked with ease and fluency, showing a greater extent of reading than Vincent had ever known Miss Wilmot to display; but there was a nameless charm in the conversation of the latter, which that of the former did not possess, at least in the same degree. The commonplace topics, such as books, parties, riding, et cetera, were all discussed in their turn; when Miss Eldredge, curious to know something of Vincent's history, gave such a turn to the discourse as allowed him, if so disposed, to speak of himself. He did not, however, voluntarily em-

brace the opportunity to give any of the coveted information; but he readily answered such interrogatories as the young lady ventured to put to him.

"You have said," she observed, "that you know something of mercantile affairs. You have been a clerk, then?"

"You have guessed rightly," answered Vincent. "I was, for several years, a clerk in one of the leading houses of this city."

"I should have taken you," said Miss Eldredge, "rather for a young man just emerged from college, brimful of learning, than a merchant's clerk familiar with rum, sugar, and tobacco."

"You ridicule my pedantry," observed Vincent; "and I must, therefore, in future, avoid any allusion to Latin, Greek, and kindred subjects."

"And confine yourself to those that come within the scope of a lady's capacity, you would have said, but dared not," observed Miss Eldredge, smiling. "You are mistaken, though, if you really suppose that I consider you pedantic. I meant only to convey the idea, that, in a clerk, I should not have looked for so much information as you evidently possess."

"Why not in a clerk, pray?"

"Because I believe they are generally not so well educated as those who are destined for the learned professions."

"Perhaps not generally; but there are among them those whose acquirements are more than re-

spectable; and I have known clerks who, by their own unaided exertions, have attained an amount of learning, such as very few can lay claim to, who have had all the advantages of a collegiate course."

"I do not question it," replied Miss Eldredge; "and, if I mistake not, we might find an instance without going far to seek it."

"You overrate my attainments, if you speak seriously," said Vincent, "for I have no pretension to a thorough classical education. It is true that I have improved the slender opportunities that I possessed, and devoted a considerable portion of my leisure time to literary pursuits; but the result is not such as to warrant my taking rank with even the poorest of our scholars."

"There you underrate yourself. Our poorest scholars are miserable affairs."

"That is true. I have seen those who had spent their four years at college, and obtained their degree and a character for scholarship which they did not merit, who were unable, if their lives depended on the issue, to construe a single page of Virgil without the assistance of a dictionary in every line."

"And with even these you cannot place yourself on a level! Pray, whom did you serve?"

"Wilmot & Co. is the house in whose employ I lived for many years."

"Indeed! The Wilmots are particular friends of ours. Do you know Clara?"

"I recently had the pleasure of being introduced

to her at Beechwood, where I spent a few days very pleasantly."

"She is my most intimate friend, and a very amiable girl, if I am a judge. Do you not think so?"

"I agree with you fully. I have rarely seen a young lady possessing so cultivated a mind, or manners more elegant and pleasing."

"You must be the young gentleman of whom she spoke, in a late letter to me, as being on a visit to her father. Were you not thrown from your horse in going thither?"

"The animal fell with me."

"Ah, you are the same, then. Clara did not mention your name, which rather surprised me, considering that she devoted to you a paragraph as long as my finger."

"I hope she gave me a tolerable character," observed Vincent, smiling.

"Perhaps you would like to know precisely what she said of you? indeed, I know you would, for that blush tells a tale."

"I should, indeed," replied Vincent; "for it is natural to be somewhat curious about the opinions entertained of us by our friends."

"Especially by our most particular friend. Very true, that last remark of yours; but I fear that I cannot gratify you, without violating confidence, even were it prudent to do so."

"Pray, how do you make it a question of prudence?"

"You might not be able to listen to my young friend's criticisms with perfect equanimity of temper."

"I hope she has said nothing calculated to disturb it."

"Did she not rally you on your unskilful horsemanship?"

"She did."

"How, then, can you hope that she, who is so good a rider, will spare you in her letters to me?"

"I do not expect it, nor do I desire it, since it appears to afford her much pleasure to insist that I am a poor horseman. But I would fain believe that so sensible a young lady has spoken of me—"

"As a sensible young man," interrupted Miss Eldredge, laughing. "Well, I will say this much, that Clara considers you an honest, well-meaning, and industrious sort of a person, who, with some practice under a good teacher, might attain to considerable skill in horsemanship and be able to ride from New-York to Beechwood without endangering your neck and scratching your face. These, to be sure, were not the terms she used, but a liberal construction of her language warrants me in giving this as something like the idea she intended to convey."

CHAPTER X.

CHARLES had the pleasure to discover that his services gave perfect satisfaction to his employer; and he, on his part, had abundant reason to be satisfied with the terms that had been agreed upon, and with the nature of his occupation. Mr. Eldredge, having soon discovered Vincent's abilities and acquirements, proposed that a part of his time should be devoted to the study of law; a proposition which Charles readily accepted, although the legal profession was not the one he would have selected, had the choice been left to him. Formerly he had entertained a strong prejudice against lawyers, but he now esteemed himself happy in the prospect of becoming one, under the auspices of so able and so celebrated an advocate as Mr. Eldredge. He saw that the road to political preferment lies through this profession; and as he was ambitious of distinction, he hoped, at some future day, to enjoy all the honours which talents and industry can acquire.

Vincent now regarded himself as permanently situated; and having determined to make the most of the advantage which it had been his good fortune to secure, he devoted nearly all his leisure hours to study, with the ardour which had ever characterized him in whatever he undertook. He rose very ear-

ly, frequently before it was sufficiently light to read without a candle; and when he left the office at night, he repaired to his solitary chamber, and gave himself to his books; allowing so little time for exercise, that, had his studies not suffered an interruption, his health must inevitably have sunk under the confinement.

During the first two weeks, Vincent remarked that his friend Duval (as we must for the present call him) continued very much the same as on the first day of their meeting in the office; that is to say, he was pale and thoughtful, frequently suspending his task unconsciously, and talking as little as possible with his fellow-students. It was not uncommon for him to sit at his desk for an hour, with his head resting upon one hand, holding the unemployed pen with the other, his eyes fixed with a vacant stare upon the half-written page before him. It was apparent that the cause of this abstraction of mind could be no trifling matter, since, for a fortnight at least, it had continued to operate on his feelings with increasing influence. Some of the students charged him with being in love, and made his supposed passion the subject of many witty but good-natured remarks. Duval took no offence, but frequently smiled at the droll observations of his friends, neither admitting nor denying that their conjectures as to the cause of his depression were correct.

Charles, who felt a deep interest in Duval, was anxious to learn the source of his dejection; but,

as his friend had partly promised to speak to him on the subject, he forbore to allude to it, hoping daily that Duval would voluntarily acquaint him with all that he desired to know. Two weeks elapsed, during which the two friends often conversed in the office, and always walked together after the duties of the day, Vincent invariably going a little out of his way to accompany Duval home; but not a word was said by the latter in reference to the troubled state of his feelings, although many excellent opportunities of doing so had presented, which Vincent thought would have been embraced had he felt disposed to make him a confidant. One evening, however, on their way home, Duval, after being unusually thoughtful and silent, said to his companion,

"Charles, the first day you came to our office, you did me the honour to sympathize in my distress, and to offer whatever aid you could render towards its alleviation. I then observed that I should probably take the freedom of acquainting you with the cause of my depression of spirits; and I should have done so before this time, had I not been ashamed to confess that a foolish passion for a lovely girl has taken such possession of my mind, as to render me incapable of performing the duties pertaining to my situation. Add to this my reluctance to trouble you with a matter in which you can feel little or no interest, and you have my reasons for deferring, till now, the relation of my

little history. If you are disposed to listen to it, I will meet you on the Battery an hour hence."

At the appointed time, Vincent and his friend were seated upon one of the benches in a retired part of that delightful spot, sacred to those who enjoy the sight of green grass, trees, and scenery of the finest description. The moon was shining brightly, and the warmth of the evening had brought thither many people of both sexes, who were either promenading the broad gravel walks, or sitting under the trees, watching the rockets, as they from time to time shot up from the castle.

"I shall not detain you long here, Vincent," said Duval, "for I know the inestimable value set upon time by persons of your studious habits. My tale will be a short one; but, brief as I shall make it, I fear that you will find in it much food for ridicule."

"You may proceed," replied Vincent, "without apprehending that I shall feel otherwise than interested in the recital; for I know too well the power of love over the human mind, to allow myself to ridicule an exhibition of it in your case. We are so constituted that the passion springs up, as it were, spontaneously, like a plant from a genial soil; and, before we are scarcely aware of its existence, we find it a gigantic tree, overshadowing our being, and, with its drooping and wide-spreading boughs, bounding our view to the single object of the heart's adoration."

"A few weeks since," continued Duval, "late in the afternoon, I met a young lady in the street,

and was at the time so forcibly struck with her uncommon beauty, that I could not refrain from following her, in order to ascertain her place of residence. She was tall and admirably well-formed, about sixteen years of age; and her eyes, which were black, wore a soft and dreamy expression, such as I had rarely, if ever before, beheld. The glance that I had of her sufficed to show that her countenance was lovely beyond description; and, charming as I then thought her, I discovered, subsequently, that my first idea of her exquisite beauty fell far short of the reality.

"It was in Broadway that I saw her, and she was walking towards this place. I followed her on the opposite side of the street; but, when she had gone as far as St. Paul's, there came along several companies of soldiers, attended by a crowd of boys and others, who thronged the walks, and completely hid her from my view. I sought her everywhere, but did not succeed in finding her. After a fruitless search of more than an hour, I returned to the place where I last saw her; nor could I tear myself from the spot till it had become quite dark, when I went home in despair, to pass a sleepless and miserable night. This, I know, you will call love at first sight with a vengeance; yet it is not less true than strange, that so deep an impression was thus suddenly made by one whose face I had seen but once, and then only for a very short time. This feeling I had never before, even in a slight degree, experienced, which may, per-

haps, account for the strength of my first and only attachment of this nature.

"Next day, and for several succeeding days, I walked the streets, particularly Broadway, in the hope of meeting her again; but although I saw many beautiful faces, I had not the good fortune to meet the one I sought. Time, which, it is said, tends to efface impressions of this kind, seemed rather to deepen mine; for, at the expiration of a week, her angelic figure constantly haunted my imagination, and during my waking hours she was seldom absent from my thoughts.

"One day, as I was going home from the office through a by-street, I was most agreeably surprised, not to say startled, on seeing her coming towards me. When I passed her, she looked at me (no doubt for the first time in her life) with such a peculiar expression, that I felt assured she knew precisely what my feelings were at that moment. I fancied that I saw a slight blush tinge her cheek, indicating a consciousness of being beloved by the person who was at that instant before her. I felt, on approaching her, a degree of timidity that compelled me to turn away my eyes after the first glance; yet I did not suffer her to pass without venturing to look once more at her charming features. When she had gone by, however, I turned immediately, and saw her enter, without knocking, a respectable boarding-house. I concluded that she resided there; and, after taking particular no-

tice of the building, so that I should know it again (for there happened to be no number on the door), I went home, revolving in my mind how I should manage to procure an introduction. I had no friends in that vicinity, nor was I aware of knowing any individual who boarded at the same house. To make her acquaintance, therefore, seemed, at the time, unless I should go there to live, to be a work of some difficulty. Situated as I then was, it was almost impossible for me to leave my lodgings honourably, accommodated in money matters as I had been, by the female that kept the house. I determined, nevertheless, to change for a short period, and to go back to the old place after I should have attained my object. This seemed the most feasible method of accomplishing my purpose; indeed, it was the only way, unless I could light upon some friend who was acquainted in the house where the young lady lived.

"Next day I made some inquiries, but could find no person who had even heard of the house in question; and, despairing of success by this means, I went thither with a view of taking board for a short time. I was shown into the parlour, and found there alone the being who, from the period of our first meeting, has possessed so unlimited a power over my feelings. She was sewing when I entered, but in a few minutes left the room. The lady of the house, or, rather, the hostess, soon after came in, and, much to my disappointment, informed me that all her apartments were occupied, and that

she could not accommodate me with board, even for a single week.

"I began now to relinquish all hopes of accomplishing my object, although I still continued my efforts to find some person who could be of service to me. At one time I thought seriously of writing to the young lady, stating that I was an ardent admirer, and that it would afford me the highest pleasure to be permitted to pay my respects to her, without the formality of a regular introduction. A little reflection, however, taught me that this would be a hazardous liberty, which might cost me her esteem, if I should ever be so fortunate as to become acquainted with her in some less objectionable manner; and I resolved, therefore, that, if I pursued this method at all, it should only be as a dernier resort, and when all my endeavours to obtain an introduction, should have failed of success.

"Fortune at length favoured me. One day there came into our office a gentleman-like man, who had business of importance with Mr. Eldredge. He called every day for a week, but at last was taken sick, and confined not only to the house, but to his room. I was employed to carry a message to him; and, when I received the directions, I was most agreeably surprised to find that he lived in the same house with my fair unknown. The first time I went on this business, I was conducted into the parlour, and requested to wait there till the gentleman was ready to receive me; and, while I remained, I conversed with the hostess, who immedi-

ately recognised me as the person that had recently applied to her for board. On several subsequent occasions, I had opportunities of talking with this woman, which I never failed to improve. One day I ventured to inquire who the young lady is whom I had seen in the drawing-room, and was told that her name is M'Cready. I did not like to ask the favour of an introduction; but my friend, the hostess (whose name was Wilson), obviated the necessity, by volunteering to make us acquainted, if I desired to know her. Of course, I accepted the offer with thanks, and observed, that, if it was agreeable to her, I would call the same evening for that purpose; to which she readily assented.

"I went accordingly, and spent a few hours delightfully with Miss M'Cready. Mrs. Wilson was present part of the evening, but about nine o'clock she withdrew, leaving us together till nearly eleven, at which time I departed. I found the young lady exceedingly well-informed. She conversed admirably upon every topic that was started, and made numerous observations that evinced a judgment unusually mature for one of her age. Her manners were polished, and, to me, exceedingly agreeable. There was a degree of quiet and repose in her demeanour, which contrasted strikingly with the noisy vivacity so common among young ladies of the present day. I observed that she seldom smiled but with apparent reluctance; and her fine countenance, especially when she was not talking, wore a decided expression of sadness.

"The effect of that visit was to increase my passion for this lovely creature. In the course of a few evenings, I called again and found her at home; but this time, several individuals were present, and remained till I went away. I was naturally desirous to know something more of Miss M'Cready than simply her name; and at every visit, my wish to learn her history strengthened. There was no other person of the same name in the house, nor, so far as I could discover, did she appear to be under the protection of anybody but the hostess. Mrs. Wilson had told me that Miss M'Cready was not a relative of hers, and that it was only within a fortnight or three weeks that the young lady had come there to live. She did not, however, appear to be communicative on the subject of her pretty boarder; and as I could not, without exhibiting an impertinent inquisitiveness, ask any questions, I was compelled to remain content with the little information that had been vouchsafed. This mystery augmented the curiosity I felt to know more concerning her; and my imagination, stimulated by the feelings with which she had unconsciously inspired me, and by her cultivated mind and elegant manners, made me regard her with a romantic interest, which has, to this moment, continued to increase.

"I noticed that but little attention was paid to her by her fellow-boarders, notwithstanding that her conversation was such as would have afforded the highest pleasure to any sensible man. Perhaps, however, it was her superiority to them in mental re-

finement which kept them aloof; for I have observed, that young men of inferior education and limited understanding, are generally shy of intellectual excellence, particularly in females. Even those of her own sex, excepting her kind hostess Mrs. Wilson, said but little to her, at least in my presence; and from some remarks which Miss M'Cready casually made, I inferred that she was left very much to herself. That this was in accordance with her own preference, I have her assurance; for she observed to me that much of her solitary time was passed very agreeably in study, and that she was quite as happy as if she were on a footing of intimacy with the inmates of the house. I would not be understood to say that any ill will existed between her and those by whom she was surrounded. On the contrary, she always spoke respectfully of her fellow-lodgers, and they, on their part, evidently admired, while they entertained for her a feeling allied to dread, which is not incompatible with the highest esteem. With me she was always affable, and I fancied that she seemed pleased whenever I entered the room. I was in the practice of loaning her books, and twice she desired me to procure certain new works for her; requests that afforded me the greatest pleasure, because they showed that she esteemed me sufficiently to be willing to ask a slight favour.

"When the acquaintance had been of some weeks' standing, I ventured to invite her to go with me to the theatre; but she declined in such a manner as

left me in doubt whether she questioned the propriety of the act, or was averse to me as her companion. Her ostensible reason was, that she had never been, and did not desire to visit such a place. Subsequently, she more than once declined walking out with me, without assigning any satisfactory reason. I could not account for this, inasmuch as she had, by her own admission, done the same with some other gentleman. Why she invariably refused when I asked her, was then a mystery which has since been explained. When I saw her at home, her conduct was uniformly such as left me no reason to suspect that my company was not perfectly agreeable to her; but nothing could induce her to go abroad with me, not even to church, when Mrs. Wilson or some other lady would have attended us.

"From circumstances which could not fail to attract my attention, I began to fear that some other person was very attentive to Miss M'Cready, though I never happened to meet him there, nor, indeed, have I ever seen him at all. Twice I was denied admittance, being told by the servant that Miss M'Cready was not at home; and I then believed, what I afterward discovered to be true, that my rival was both times in the house. Frequently, when I requested permission to call on certain evenings, she objected; pleading unavoidable engagements, and suggesting other evenings on which she would be disengaged, and very happy to see me. She expected her lover at such times as she declined receiving my visit, and, of course, a third

person would be *de trop*. When I was under an engagement to call at an appointed time, she did not deem it necessary to exclude others, which plainly evinced that she regarded me simply as an ordinary friend. This made me excessively uneasy, for it was apparent that, however much she esteemed me, there was another who had made a deep impression on her heart. Had I not loved her as I did, and been desirous to secure her preference over all others, I should have had no reason to complain of her conduct towards me; for it was, in all respects, such as one friend would be satisfied with in another, but not such as an ardent lover would be content with in his mistress.

"My visits now became very frequent, and I began to be considered by the boarders and others as one who sought the hand of Miss M'Cready. I was not, of course, looked upon as her accepted lover, for it was generally believed that she was actually engaged to my rival, whose name was then alike unknown to them and to me. My suit was, therefore, called a hopeless one.

"In the conduct of this fortunate lover, whoever he may be, there was something strange and inexplicable. Often as he went to visit Miss M'Cready, there were some of the inmates who had not even seen him, and those that had could not describe his appearance minutely, as he always withdrew when he perceived that he could not be alone with the young lady. He endeavoured, as much as possible, to keep out of sight; and so successfully did he

manage this, that not one person belonging to the house would have recognised him, had they met in open day. He preferred, when he called upon Miss M'Cready, to walk with her in the street; and when this could not be, he went away, unless the drawing-room happened to be vacated, in which case he usually remained till some other person came, when he immediately retired, as if afraid of being seen and known.

"My passion soon became so intense, that I could not refrain from declaring it, although the young lady must have perceived that my feelings were far from being those of mere friendship. She had, I thought, endeavoured to open the way for such a declaration, doubting, as she evidently did, the propriety of her receiving my visits while she was under a matrimonial engagement to another, and wishing also for a suitable opportunity to make the necessary explanation. At this time, however, I did not know that her hand had been pledged, otherwise I should have immediately quitted the field and discontinued my visits. I barely suspected that such was the case, and it was with a view of putting an end to the uncertainty, that I determined to declare my love and tender my hand. No sooner was this resolution formed, than I proceeded to carry it into effect. To make sure of being alone with her the same evening, I called in the afternoon to make the appointment, and desired to see her without the presence of a third person. Divining my object, she promised to take a short

walk with me in the event of any boarders being in the drawing-room at the hour of my visit. I went home with my bosom filled with mingled hopes and fears. I dreaded to hear from her own lips that she could never be mine; and, at the same time, notwithstanding the unfavourable prospect before me, I could not relinquish the pleasing hope that she was already prepared to accept the offer I was about to make.

"She was alone in the drawing-room when I came in the evening. After a little preliminary conversation, I approached the subject of my love, revealed to her the passion that was consuming me, and finally offered her my hand in marriage. She listened not without some agitation, and with tears glistening in her eyes, told me that her affections were placed on another, to whom she had been but a short time engaged. She professed the highest regard for me; observed that she had passed many happy hours in my company; and that, as a friend, she valued me next to him to whom she had pledged her faith. She thanked me for the honour I had done her, and feelingly remarked that it pained her to give such an answer to my proposition as doomed me to a sore disappointment. She expressed the hope that we should continue to be friends, though we could never sustain a nearer relation; and added, that it would give her much pleasure to introduce me, at the proper time, to the gentleman into whose keeping she had committed her happiness.

"My fears were now realized, and I saw that it only remained for me to bear the disappointment as well as I could; though I well knew that I should never cease to adore the object of my first love, and to regret the unfortunate termination of my suit.

"After some moments of silence, I ventured to ask the name of my happy and successful rival, not dreaming that the interrogatory might be an improper one, or that she could hesitate to give a direct reply. It was natural that I should feel desirous to know who was so fortunate as to have the possession of so lovely a being in prospect; but I should not have made the inquiry, had I suspected that it might cause her the slightest embarrassment. She did not answer immediately, but blushed and looked confused; whereupon I hastened to apologize for my impertinence in asking the question. She then observed, that, strange as it might seem to me, she was not at liberty to disclose the name of her intended, having been requested by him to keep it a secret, till such time as he should think it advisable to let it be known. What his reasons were, she professed not to know; but said, with much simplicity, that they were doubtless good ones, otherwise she was sure he would have no objections to her friends' knowing his name and family.

"It was not for me to take this affair into my own hands; but, if I had possessed the right to interfere, I should have felt warranted, by this circumstance, in probing it to the bottom. That a young man of

respectability and character should engage himself to a lady, and, at the same time, not only keep, as much as possible, out of the sight of her friends and acquaintance, but forbid her telling them who and what he was, appeared to me to be so strange as to authorize the conclusion that his intentions with regard to her were the reverse of honourable. She divined my thoughts from the surprise which was depicted in my countenance, and then, with much earnestness of manner, assured me that the gentleman was a man of honour, as she knew him to be highly respectable, and connected with one of the best families of New-York. She admitted that his requisition in regard to the concealment of his name was a singular one; but she remained contented with his simple declaration that he had a satisfactory reason for it, which should be made known to her in due time. I replied that, for her sake, I certainly hoped he would prove to be the high-minded and honourable man she thought him; and that it was my sincere wish he would, when united to her, make her as happy as she deserved to be, and as I would have endeavoured to render her, had it pleased Heaven to bless my suit.

"I was sure that all was not as it should be; and although she expressed entire confidence in his honesty of purpose, yet I could perceive that she felt a degree of alarm, which she in vain endeavoured to conceal. When I rose to depart, she asked me if I would not occasionally visit her as a friend; and I saw a tear moisten her eye when I

replied that it would gratify me extremely to be permitted sometimes to spend an evening in her society.

"A few days elapsed before I saw her again. I had a volume of hers, otherwise I should have suffered a month or more to pass before I made her another visit. I went to the house one evening, designing simply to give her the book, thank her for the loan, and take my leave; but when I arrived, finding her alone, sitting pensively by an open window, and looking much paler than I had ever seen her, I was induced to take a seat and remain longer than I had intended. My first thought was that she had been ill; and when I inquired the cause of her altered appearance, she replied, with a faint smile, that it did not agree with her to study so hard in warm weather. There was less vivacity of manner than ordinary, and that sadness, which seemed natural to her countenance, was now deepened into an expression of sorrow. She made an effort to entertain me, and to appear contented and happy; but, in spite of her exertions, the stamp of deep distress upon her pale features, and the occasional sigh that escaped her, made it apparent that there was in her bosom some of that

"'Perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart.'

"No allusion was made by either of us to her engagement, or to the gentleman to whom she was pledged. Our conversation ran chiefly on the new publications of the day; but it soon began to flag, in

consequence of the failure of her efforts to keep her mind from recurring to the absorbing topic which constantly solicited her attention. I, on my part, was too much occupied with the thoughts suggested by her appearance, to take much interest in conversation; and, consequently, as if by mutual consent, we relapsed into silence, which continued unbroken for a considerable length of time. She was the first to break it by attempting an apology for her abstraction, and immediately renewed her efforts to talk with her usual ease and fluency. I saw, however, that she did this only with great labour, and I therefore rose to take my leave, when, in a trembling voice, she desired me, as a particular favour, to come again before many days.

"This request gave me food for much thought. I returned home reflecting upon it, and asked myself the question, whether her engagement, if not already broken, was not to her a subject of regret, and the source of that mental trouble which, in so short a period, had wrought the striking change I had remarked; and whether her wish to see me soon again, was not a circumstance on which I might ground the cheering hope of one day securing her affections and her hand. The longer I thought, the more I was disposed to answer in the affirmative, and the brighter became the hitherto dark prospect before me. I retired that night with the pleasing conviction that fortune had an unexpected blessing in store for me; and, before I

slept, I regarded Miss M'Cready as already my own.

"Three days subsequently to this, one of the lodgers, with whom I had become slightly acquainted, met me in the street, and told the unwelcome news that Miss M'Cready was very ill, and not expected to survive the attack. I repaired to the house without loss of time, and had an interview with Mrs. Wilson. From her I learned that the young lady had been taken sick two days before; that they sent immediately for a physician, who found her in a high fever and delirious; and that, notwithstanding all the powerful remedial measures which had been adopted, her symptoms had grown worse, till little or no hope of her recovery was left. She said it was the doctor's opinion that her malady had its origin in the mind, and that she herself was disposed to believe that such was the fact, since she had reason to think that Miss M'Cready's marriage engagement had been broken off. The young man had not been to the house for seven or eight days, and during that time she had been exceedingly melancholy, confining herself to her own room, and frequently weeping as if her heart would break. Mrs. Wilson had repeatedly asked her the cause of her distress, but could obtain no satisfactory answer.

"During her delirium she had frequently mentioned my name, but never that of the gentleman to whom she had been engaged. This was thought to be very remarkable, as the cause of that melan-

choly which had nearly resulted in death, would, I should suppose, be the theme on which her mind would continually dwell. Such, however, was not the case.

"She remained in this critical state during that night and the following day; but the next evening she fell into a sweet sleep, and when she awoke, her mind was as clear as it ever had been. Since then she has been perfectly calm, but melancholy, and has not been seen to smile. She appears to have subdued the enemy of her peace, but reduced herself to a mere wreck in the struggle.

"A few days ago Mrs. Wilson told me that Miss M'Cready had disclosed to her what had taken place between her and the unknown, whose name she persisted in concealing. He had, it seems, no serious intention of marrying her, but had made the engagement only as a means of accomplishing his villanous purpose; and when he thought that success was no longer doubtful, he made a proposal which showed him in his true colours, and compelled her to banish him for ever from her presence. Nor was this all: for when she indignantly repelled his insulting proposition, he frankly confessed to her that he had never for a moment harboured a serious thought of making her his wife, and then left her with a sneering remark touching the meanness of her birth.

"Miss M'Cready, though she remains in her own room the greater portion of the time, comes down stairs every day, but has not strength suffi-

cient to admit of her going abroad. She is impressed with the idea that she is fast sinking to the grave, and I confess that I am seriously apprehensive that such will prove to be the case. I have frequently visited her since her sickness, and she always seems happy to see me. I have exerted myself to amuse her, and endeavoured, by loaning her entertaining books, to keep her mind employed. She perceived my object, and more than once expressed her gratitude for what she was pleased to call my kindness. Again I spoke in my own behalf; but she begged me to say no more on that subject, declaring that she had no heart to bestow in exchange for so much love as I professed. I told her that I would be satisfied with her esteem, her friendship—they were all I asked, all I expected with her hand; that I would give her years to eradicate the feelings which are now consuming her, and would patiently wait their lapse for a full harvest of affection. I plead with all the eloquence I could command, for I felt that the happiness of my future life depended on the issue. All, however, was to no purpose, for she steadily adhered to her first resolution. She considers herself unworthy of me, because she is unable to love me as she ought; and this, I believe, is her only reason for refusing my proffered hand.

"Such, Vincent, is a history of this affair of the heart, the effect of which, you say, is so perceptible. I am ashamed of the weakness, but I cannot help it."

"I do not think you need despair, Duval," said Vincent; "for I think, in time, she will consent to be yours. A few months will work a great change in her feelings, depend upon it."

"I hope they may. But, Vincent, why do you call me Duval? You have done so several times before, and it has been my intention to correct you; but I have either forgotten it, or thought you would soon learn better."

"Pray, what is your name?" asked Vincent, with much surprise.

"Walter Anderson."

"Duval was the name on the card which you presented to me. Here it is: read for yourself."

"It was a mistake of mine," replied Anderson; "that card contains the name of one of my intimate friends, and, when I gave it to you, I certainly thought it was one of my own."

Anderson and Vincent now separated, to meet at the office on the following morning.

CHAPTER XI.

WITH the reader's permission, we will now transfer him, for a short time, to Beechwood and its vicinity. We have already seen that Brown, on his way to his uncle's, stopped a while at the residence of Mr. Jenks, where he gave an account of what had occurred between him and Vincent, and of the dismissal (as he termed it) of the latter from the service of Wilmot & Co. He stated, also, that he himself had just quitted that firm, and ascribed the necessity of his doing so to Vincent, for whom, he alleged, his uncle had shown a decided preference. He did not attempt, however, to reconcile the supposed partiality with the dismissal of which he spoke.

Our worthy friend Mrs. Jenks listened to the tale with feelings of compassion, and forthwith took sides with him, not only against Vincent, whom she never liked, but also against Mr. Wilmot. Our readers will probably remember, that she had certain views respecting her daughter Edith, with which Richard Brown was intimately connected. It was, as we have before remarked, the study of all her waking hours to obtain for her darling children the hands of Richard and Clara; but, unfortunately, the more she did to effect these desirable unions, the less

likely she appeared to be successful. Brown had frequently noticed her undisguised efforts to bring him and Edith permanently together; nay, he had virtually been told by her, that it would be extremely satisfactory to herself and husband, to have him for a son-in-law. Notwithstanding the plainness of her speech and of her actions, he never entertained the most distant idea of seeking Edith's hand; for, although he considered her (what she was not) a sensible as well as a pretty girl, yet his cousin Clara had too strong a hold upon his affections, to permit his thinking seriously of any other. He felt flattered, however, as well as amused, by the pains taken by Mrs. Jenks to entrap him; and even took a degree of pleasure in encouraging her to suppose that she was making good progress in her agreeable task. He pretended, at times, to be in love with Miss Jenks; but, however he might impose upon the old lady, he could not make Edith believe that such was the case; for she knew too well that he was a most ardent admirer of his fair cousin Miss Wilmot.

Nor was Mrs. Jenks less active in the cause of her son. We have seen something of her management on the occasion of the birthday visit; and how she disgusted Clara with her silly observations in relation to the scrap of poetry which her son had composed. If Jasper, who was a young man of good sense, had ever had it in his power to win the heart and hand of Miss Wilmot, his chance had been entirely destroyed by the officiousness of his injudicious mother, whose unwearied exertions in his

behalf had rendered, not only him, but herself, perfectly odious to the lady whom she was solicitous to please. She persisted in the almost daily practice of visiting Beechwood on some pretence or another; but latterly, Jasper, who used generally to accompany her, had refused to go when she did, having perceived that his visits were unwelcome to Miss Wilmot, and being evidently ashamed of the conversation and conduct of his mother. He occasionally went thither alone, or in company with his father; but there was very little intercourse between him and Clara, in consequence of the growing aversion of the latter to every member of the Jenks family. Even Edith began to lose the friendship of Miss Wilmot, though there never had been much intimacy between them; yet she continued her visits to Beechwood, notwithstanding that Clara had not, of late, entered Mr. Jenks's doors, or shown the slightest disposition to continue the acquaintance. The coolness on the part of Miss Wilmot, and the formal politeness of her parents, did not deter the old lady from paying her respects at Beechwood whenever it suited her convenience; nor did she, in the smallest degree, change her tone of familiarity, which must have been so offensive to those to whom it was addressed.

Thus matters stood at the time that Brown told his story at the mansion of the quondam auctioneer. No sooner had he taken his departure, than Mrs. Jenks called her family around her, and talked over the whole subject with great earnestness. She re-

joiced in the rupture between Mr. Wilmot and his nephew, thinking it would not only break off the supposed engagement of Brown and Clara, but render it almost certain that Edith would now be in requisition, inasmuch as she, after Miss Wilmot, was thought to stand highest in Richard's estimation. From this, she argued, another advantage would inevitably flow. Once establish a connexion between the families, and nothing would be more natural than for Clara to alter her mind, since, having lost Brown, she could not do otherwise than to accept the next in order, which was Jasper. Neither the son nor daughter, however, manifested the degree of confidence felt by their mother; for they could not appreciate, as she wished, the cogency of her reasoning. Edith did not, in fact, care sufficiently about Brown to rejoice in any change that improved her prospect in reference to him; for another had lately inspired her with a sentiment akin to love, which one more sight of its object would probably fan into a flame. Jasper, more clearsighted than his mother, saw difficulties in the way of success which did not occur to her; and he therefore heard of Brown's rash resolution without regarding it as a circumstance likely to be of any advantage to himself.

Edith consented, with some reluctance, to accompany her mother to Beechwood, but Jasper positively refused to go thither; nor could the most earnest persuasions induce him to embrace this favourable opportunity to press his claims on the notice

of Miss Wilmot. After much scolding and fretting on the part of the old lady, to all which her obstinate son remained insensible, she ordered the carriage to be got ready and brought to the door.

There was another thing she now regretted, which was, that, since Brown was about to leave Mr. Wilmot, she had not given him an invitation to come and spend some time with them. She could not forgive herself for having omitted so important a manœuvre, as it would have been the surest means of making him completely their own. She hurried her preparations, in the hope to reach Beechwood previously to Brown's leaving it, that she might repair her oversight by privately desiring the favour of his company.

When Mrs. Jenks and her daughter arrived at Mr. Wilmot's, Brown was gone. They were received at the door by Mrs. Wilmot, who, not being in the best possible humour, wished them anywhere rather than at Beechwood. They had little reason, however, to complain of their reception, excepting that it was a few degrees colder than any other person would have been satisfied with; but to Mrs. Jenks this was of no consequence, as she always made it a point to overlook what she did not wish to see. Clara was seated near a window with a book in her hand, while with the other she was stroking the head of her father's pointer, which sat at her feet; and when Mrs. Jenks and her daughter entered, she received them with her usual suavity of manner, but, at the same time, considered the call

in the light of what is sometimes termed a visitation.

"You cannot think, ladies," began Mrs. Jenks, "how glad my daughter and I am to see you. I suppose you have heard of the doings in town, haven't you?"

"What doings do you allude to?" asked Mrs. Wilmot.

"Dearest me! hasn't Mr. Brown told you? why, I expected you knew all by this time. Then I must tell you. You see—"

"Mr. Brown has communicated some unpleasant news," interrupted Mrs. Wilmot, when she perceived that her neighbour not only had heard, but was about to repeat the substance of her nephew's story, "and I presume he has already put you in possession of the same."

"Oh, yes, he told us all about it; and, as we are so intimate, you know, I thought I would just run over with Edith, and talk over this unfortunate business."

"You are very kind," said Mrs. Wilmot, dryly.

"Now wasn't it a downright shame," continued Mrs. Jenks, "that the good-for-nothing fellow, Vincent—"

"Why, ma," interrupted Edith, "how can you talk in that manner? I'm sure I never saw anything bad in Mr. Vincent."

"Well, to be sure!" exclaimed her mother; "pray, Edith, how long is it since you took such a

liking to that young man? To hear you, one would suppose he must be a great favourite."

"Pshaw, mother, how you do talk! I only meant to say that Mr. Vincent is thought to be a respectable young man; but I could do that without his being a favourite of mine."

"Ay, ay; but if he wasn't, you'd not come out in that way; however, as I was saying, I think it too bad that Vincent should have acted as he did, and forced Mr. Wilmot to discharge Mr. Brown."

"Allow me to tell you," said Mrs. Wilmot, "that my husband did not dismiss Mr. Brown, but that he would gladly have retained him in his service had Mr. Brown been disposed to remain. The announcement of his determination to leave was quite unexpected to Mr. Wilmot."

"Why, how strange!" exclaimed Mrs. Jenks; "I'm sure Mr. Brown told me that he found himself compelled to quit the house of Wilmot & Co."

"The necessity was imaginary," answered Mrs. Wilmot.

"As I can testify," said Mr. Wilmot, entering the room.

"Well, I am right glad to hear it, for I was certain that Mr. Wilmot would never act in that manner towards his nephew."

"Did Brown say to you, Mrs. Jenks, that I dismissed him?" asked Mr. Wilmot.

"Why, not exactly," answered Mrs. Jenks; "he said he felt himself obliged to go: what he meant I can't say."

Mr. Wilmot, who felt much chagrined at the conduct of his nephew, was in no humour to continue the conversation; and, therefore, after a few commonplace observations, he withdrew, leaving to his wife and daughter the task of entertaining their visiters.

"There is one reason in particular," said Mrs. Jenks, "why I am sorry that Richard has left you. Can you guess what that is, Clara?"

"I have no idea," replied Miss Wilmot.

"Because you will be so disappointed. The good-for-nothing boy, that Vincent, for making such difficulty in a family."

"I do not understand you, Mrs. Jenks," observed Clara, with some surprise. "Pray, how can I be disappointed? Sorry I am, undoubtedly, that my cousin has felt himself under the necessity of quitting us so abruptly; but disappointment on my part implies that I expected something that will not be realized. Be so good as to explain."

"How well she makes believe that she and Brown were not engaged to be made one before long! Why, Clara, dear, how could you suppose that I did not know it, who am so intimate here? How surprised the girl looks!"

"I must confess, Mrs. Jenks," said Clara, after a few moments' pause, "that I hardly know what reply to make to your observations; for I can scarcely decide whether you jest or not."

"Perhaps, ma," said Edith, "that Clara was not

engaged. You know I always denied it, and I think she will say that I was not far wrong."

"Pshaw, Edith! how silly you are! do you think she would acknowledge it, now that it's all off? Yet I don't know why she shouldn't to us, who are so intimate. Come, come, Clara, dear, tell us all about it, and don't, pray, take it much to heart, for there is more than one fine young man in the world; or, as they say, there's as good fish in the sea as ever was caught."

"I have nothing to tell," said Clara; "but, if I understand you rightly, you suppose that an engagement of some sort existed between my cousin and me?"

"Certainly," replied Mrs. Jenks; "so the whole world supposes."

"Then allow me to say that you and the whole world are mistaken. This is all I have to say on that head."

"But, Clara, dear, don't be offended; it's not a very pleasant subject, I know, and young ladies in your situation don't much like to hear anything said about their disappointment; but I thought, as I was so intimate, I might venture to advise a little, and—"

"I thank you; but I do not, at present, happen to stand in need of advice."

"No, not exactly advice, I did not mean that; but I thought I would just say, as a friend, that you ought not to let this trouble you."

"I do not intend it shall, Mrs. Jenks."

"That's right, Clara; for, as I said before, there's

as good fish in the sea as ever was taken out of it. Do you understand?"

"I have heard the proverb frequently, but your application of it, I must confess, I do not exactly comprehend."

"Make believe you don't, now, Clara."

Miss Wilmot was silent.

"What do you think I've been saying to Jasper?" inquired Mrs. Jenks.

"I can't imagine," replied Clara, in a tone that showed her impatience of the senseless prattle of her talkative neighbour.

"Well, then, I'll tell you," said Mrs. Jenks, drawing her chair directly in front of Miss Wilmot's; "I'll tell you; Jasper, you know, is one of the bashful breed, and daren't scarcely say boo to a goose when there's a handsome young lady near him. Now it happens that the boy is very fond of a certain pretty girl, and he is so foolish that he never would tell her of it, because she was, as he said, attached to another. Well, everybody supposed she was engaged to be married, and so Jasper thought there was no chance for him. But, by-and-by, her intended packs off, and leaves her again in the market, as my husband used to say about goods he sold under the hammer; and then I told Jasper that good farmers always make hay while the sun shines, or, according to the old saying, that a person ought to strike while the iron's hot—"

"Ma," said Clara, "there comes Barnes; I'll just step and inquire how his wife is this afternoon.

Excuse me, Mrs. Jenks, for a few moments; I will return very soon."

Miss Wilmot, happy to find an excuse to withdraw, put on her bonnet, and went over the lawn in the direction of Barnes's house, where she had a patient in the person of his wife. She had been there once before that day, and would not, therefore, have gone again, but for her wish to escape the intolerable conversation of Mrs. Jenks.

"Clara don't like to hear me say anything about Jasper," said Mrs. Jenks; "but it's always the way with young ladies: mention the names of the gentlemen they like, and they fly off at a tanger."

"At a tangent, ma," said Edith, laughing at her mother's error.

"I think you have mistaken the cause of Clara's leaving us," said Mrs. Wilmot, "for I do not see why she should absent herself in consequence of your son's happening to be the subject of conversation."

"Well, I must send Jasper over here. I'll warrant Clara will not go to the fisherman's then—the dear little creature; how attached she and Jasper are! I was telling my son, no longer ago than this morning, that they would make an interesting couple. Is Mr. Brown in the house?"

"He went to town before you came," replied Mrs. Wilmot, smiling at her neighbour's remarks.

"La, how sorry I am!" exclaimed Mrs. Jenks; "for I intended, since he will leave you, to invite him to our house. Brown has always been my

favourite, and I do so pity the young man. What will be his address in the city?"

"That I cannot tell you," answered Mrs. Wilmot.

"We must endeavour to find him out. Come, Edith, let us go. Do, Mrs. Wilmot, come and see us very soon, and bring dear Clara along with you. We must endeavour to amuse her all we can; and tell her that Jasper shall come over to-morrow, and take a ride with her on horseback. He's very bashful, I know, but she mustn't mind that: it's a sign he likes her. Good-morning, Mrs. Wilmot; I won't let it be so long before I come again; for I do hold, and I was telling Mr. Jenks no longer ago than yesterday, that people as intimate as we are, should see one another at least three or four times a week, if not oftener. If you hear from Mr. Brown, do let me know; and tell Clara not to think of him any more; but, as for that matter, I'm sure she won't when my son comes over, as I mean he shall immediately. Come, Edith."

Soon after they had departed, Clara entered, having been detained by her patient longer than she had expected.

"So, Clara," said her mother, "you no sooner lose one lover, than you are forthwith provided with another by our kind neighbour, Mrs. Jenks."

"I have neither lost one nor gained another," said Clara; "though I perceive that you chiefly regret the step Richard has taken, because it cuts off the hope of our being united."

"I do regret it for the reason that you are now separated, I fear, for ever; but I still entertain the hope that you will yet consent to receive him as your accepted lover. I am now satisfied that it was your rejection of his proposal that induced him to leave us, though he assigned a different reason—one that doubtless confirmed his intention."

"I must not, ma, for I do not, cannot love him; and I am sure you will not insist upon my sacrificing every chance of happiness, by consenting to what you ask."

"It would be highly satisfactory to your father as well as to me."

"You know, my dear mother, that it is my highest pleasure to consult your wishes and to obey your commands; but, in a matter which concerns the peace of my future life, I feel that I owe it to myself, to persist in the resolution I have formed."

"Is not your refusal grounded rather on your attachment to another, than on any positive objection to Richard Brown?"

"I beg you, mamma, not to question me at present on that subject; and, in return, I pledge you my word never to marry without your and my father's consent."

"Enough, Clara; I now feel safe in one particular.

"What a shame it is," continued Mrs. Wilmot, "that we should be so persecuted by those parvenues, the Jenks! Ignorant and lowbred, they have presumed, upon the little notice we bestowed upon

them at the commencement of the acquaintance, to obtrude themselves so frequently on our privacy, that they have of late become a perfect nuisance."

"The nuisance may be abated in one of two ways," said Clara.

"Name them."

"Sell Beechwood, or cut their acquaintance."

CHAPTER XII.

It was not till Vincent had parted with his friend, that he recollected who Anderson was; though, at the moment, the name struck him forcibly as that of one with whom he had recently been in some way associated. On his way home, it occurred to him that the individual whom accident had introduced to him as Henry Duval, might be the same whose attempt to commit suicide had attracted his and Brown's notice on the evening of the storm, and whom they believed to have perished in the Hudson. The countenance of Anderson, at their meeting at Hoboken, was, as the reader will probably remember, one that Vincent recollected to have seen before; and now that he recalled the features of him whom Brown and he had rescued from a watery grave, and compared them with those of his new friend, he had no longer any doubt of their identity. He rejoiced that he should have acceptable news to communicate to him, concerning the money which had been lost to Tyrrel. The sum, being ten thousand dollars, was sufficient, if well and skilfully employed, to establish Anderson in a lucrative business; or, if invested in stocks or other securities, to afford him, with the avails of his industry, a comfortable income. Under ordinary circumstances, the restoration of such an amount of money to a penniless

youth, would be to the fortunate receiver a matter of great rejoicing; but it would be especially so to him who had in view a matrimonial connexion, which he scarce dared venture upon in consequence of his want of property.

Vincent felt almost as much pleasure in the prospect of communicating such tidings to his friend, as if he himself had suddenly come into possession of the money; for his was one of those truly amiable dispositions, which take delight in the pleasing task of conferring happiness upon others.

When Mr. Eldredge entered the office, he went directly to Vincent, and in an under tone requested him to come thither the same evening, after all the others had retired. Charles passed the day in a very uneasy state of mind, fearing that his employment, which he had hoped would be permanent, was about to be taken from him. He fancied that the expression of Mr. Eldredge's countenance was that morning unusually grave; and that his tone and language had something in them different from common. He was alarmed, as the manner in which he went through his daily duties plainly indicated.

In the evening, pursuant to the appointment, he went to the office, and found the advocate there waiting for him. He was right in his conjecture respecting the business on which Mr. Eldredge desired to speak. When he had taken his seat, that gentleman observed, "Charles, I yesterday received some information concerning you, which, I confess,

has caused me much painful feeling; since, by reason of what I have learned, it becomes necessary that you should no longer be connected with my office. The information has reference to the forgery committed, as was supposed, by you; and for which you were arrested and confined one night in the city prison. I have been put in possession of all the circumstances so far as they relate to you, and I have also conversed with your late employer on the subject, who, I am happy to say, gave me an excellent account of your character and conduct, and assured me that he does not entertain a doubt of your innocence. The fact of your discharge from arrest seems to confirm his opinion, and I have no hesitation in saying that I coincide with Mr. Wilmot in his conviction that you are guiltless of that crime. Nevertheless, in consequence of what has occurred, I should be best satisfied if you would seek another situation. If it depended entirely on me to decide, I should retain you in my service; but as I have to consult, to a certain extent, the feelings and wishes of others, I am most reluctantly compelled to make this communication to you. It pains me to do so, being, as I freely and cheerfully acknowledge, under great obligations to you for the important aid you rendered my daughter in a moment of danger; and entirely satisfied, nay, extremely pleased, with the industry and application you have exhibited since you came into my office. I do not ask, however, that our acquaintance should cease because you are to be no longer in my employ; on the contrary, I should be very glad to see you at my house

whenever your inclination may lead you to come. Besides, if I can hereafter be of any service to you, I assure you that I should feel great pleasure in being called upon for such assistance, pecuniary or personal, as it may be in my power to render. I will exert myself to procure for you another situation, possessing all the advantages of that you have just lost. And now, Charles, as to the sum which is your due, I beg that you will allow me to present you with a half-year's salary, by way of compensating, in a slight degree, for the disappointment you must feel in thus losing your place."

"I thank you, Mr. Eldredge," said Vincent, "for the good opinion you seem to entertain of me, and I shall not soon forget the kindness and generosity you displayed in taking me, a perfect stranger, into your office. I will accept, sir, a fair compensation for my services, but nothing more; at the same time, I am much obliged by the offer of so much more than is due to me."

"I am sorry that you will not afford me the satisfaction of ensuring your comfort, at least till you shall obtain other employment. May I hope to see you frequently?"

"I accept your invitation with pleasure. You will naturally expect me to declare, that I am altogether innocent of the crime which seems destined to destroy my peace; but I shall defer the declaration till such time as I am prepared to prove its truth. The period is not far distant, I trust, when my friends will see their confidence in my honesty and honour fully justified."

"I hope they will, Charles; but no proof is necessary to convince me of your innocence. If you should obtain a clew to the person who, besides the baseness to commit so great a crime, had the audacity, as well as the ingenuity, to fix suspicion on you, come to me, and I will aid you in bringing him to justice."

Vincent then retired to his humble lodgings, and, having locked the door to secure himself from interruption, began to review his circumstances. He now found himself in a condition more embarrassed than ever; for he was in debt to an extent far exceeding his ability to pay, unless he could procure immediate employment. At the time he went to the advocate's office, he wanted many things requisite to make a respectable appearance; and he accordingly purchased them on a short credit, with the intention of soon drawing on his employer for as much money as might be needed. The funds he possessed at the period of his leaving Mr. Wilmot, having been disposed of in the payment of a few debts of longer standing, he was left, for a few days, almost penniless. He also engaged a room in a respectable boarding-house; and, as several articles of furniture were required, he procured them from a cabinet-maker to whom he happened to be known, and had them sent to his new lodgings, promising to pay the bill within thirty days. Besides these, there were other small debts which he had found it necessary to contract, with the understanding that they should be liquidated within a fortnight or three weeks. The total amount of these

obligations was not, it is true, more than one hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars; but as the money he had received from the advocate would discharge only a third of that sum, he found that he should not be able to perform his promises in regard to the early payment of his bills. Even if he should be so lucky as to get a good situation, he could not, before his debts became due, earn enough to pay them. He had designed to ask of Mr. Eldredge the favour of a quarter's salary in advance; but of no other person, save Mr. Wilmot, would he have been willing to make the same request. He now saw no way of avoiding the humiliating necessity of confessing to his creditors his inability to keep his word with them, and of asking their forbearance till he should be able to satisfy them from the avails of his industry.

Among the people to whom he was indebted, were two or three who would insist upon the immediate liquidation of their demands; and he had no reason to expect that the others would be satisfied with his excuses, and consent to wait for their money. Such things as had not been used, he intended to offer to those from whom he had purchased them; but what to do with the other debts that could only be paid with cash, he did not know.

The first thing he did, on the following day, was to go to the person who had let to him the room of which he was to have taken possession the same week. He stated frankly his difficulties, and desired him not to insist upon his keeping the room, now that there was no probability of his paying ac-

cording to the terms of the lease; offering, at the same time, to make good, as soon as he should be able, any damage that the landlord might sustain. He received much gross abuse in reply to the unwelcome communication, all which he bore without allowing his equanimity of temper to be disturbed by this outbreak of passion. He felt that he had given cause for offence; and although he was easily excited and quick at retort, yet, on this occasion, he commanded himself sufficiently to keep cool in spite of his landlord's unreasonable tirade. Before they parted, however, the man argeed to take the room off Vincent's hands, provided he would give a bill for a certain sum, payable at the expiration of twenty days. This proposition was immediately accepted, and Charles drew a note, hoping that, before it fell due, some turn of fortune would enable him to meet it punctually.

Having got rid of this matter for the present, Charles proceeded to pay, as far as he was able, such debts as were most pressing. His small stock of money was soon disposed of in this way; and, when he found himself with not a shilling in his purse, there still remained unpaid two or three demands which promised to be vexatious in no ordinary degree. Twenty dollars would have sufficed to silence the clamours of those entitled to call upon him for immediate payment; but, small as the sum was that he wanted, he was destitute of the means of liquidating a debt no larger than the price of a single dinner at a restaurant.

Thus circumstanced, there was no time to be lost in seeking an occupation of some sort; for the alternatives were now presented to him of borrowing money wherewith to purchase food, or depending upon the scanty table of his friend M'Gregor. His proud spirit would not permit him to do either; and he preferred enduring all the anxiety engendered by his peculiar situation, to asking the loan of a single dollar from any man.

After walking for an hour or two through the business streets of the metropolis, as if he might have indulged the hope of meeting another fortunate adventure, he went home with feelings more depressed than they had been on any former occasion. He allowed himself to be so much discouraged, as to see nothing in the future but the most abject poverty and misery. He threw himself upon a chair and wept, for he felt like an outcast, without home, fortune, or friends. When the first burst of grief was over, he began to reflect more calmly on the difficulties that surrounded him; and then reproached himself for such unmanly conduct, and set seriously at work to devise the ways and means of gaining an honest livelihood. Many projects suggested themselves, but were rejected as impracticable. He thought of going into the Western country or to the Southern states in search of a clerkship; but he was deterred by the great uncertainty attending such a move, and still more by the want of sufficient money to pay his travelling expenses. He next thought of offering him-

self as an assistant teacher in a school or academy; but, either because he did not like the confinement, or because he was distrustful of his qualifications, he soon relinquished the idea. Another plan was, to advertise himself as a teacher of the Latin and French languages; but this, in its turn, was also laid aside, for the reason that he should need money sooner than it could possibly be made by this uncertain vocation.

There was one method of raising funds, which he had read of as a source of profit in Europe, and which had early occurred to him as deserving of a trial, to be followed up in case of success attending his first experiment. This was to write an article for one of the popular magazines of the day. He felt confident of being able to produce something that any publisher of a periodical work would deem worthy to be purchased; and the longer he reflected upon it, the better satisfied he became that he had at length discovered a way of supporting himself, till he should secure a more lucrative occupation.

Having decided upon making a trial with the publishers, he commenced examining his papers to see what he had already written, that might, with some alterations and additions, be made fit to offer for insertion. Among them were several tales, which had been the work of his leisure hours, but which had never been transcribed or corrected, because they were not designed to be published. From these he selected one which he thought was

best calculated to please the popular taste, and immediately began to copy it, making such emendations as were needed. Two hours were occupied by this task; and, when he had finished it, he read the tale with much satisfaction, confident that the interest of the story, and the style in which it was written, would make it acceptable to the most fastidious critic. As he was not devoid of literary ambition, he anticipated, with no little pleasure, the credit which his production would probably do him, while he indulged the hope that he should find the writing of magazine articles, a certain, as well as a permanent, source of profit. It was the employment which, of all others, he would have liked best; because, if the experiment succeeded, he could at once gratify his love of letters and put money into his purse.

With the tale he sent a note to the editor, stating that his necessities compelled him to ask a pecuniary remuneration for the contribution; and that, if it could be made an object to him, he would continue to write for the magazine, provided his first effort should be successful. He set no price on his production, but trusted to the editor's honour to make such a return as he could afford. To the note he only put the initials of his name, and requested, as a particular favour, that an answer might, on the following morning, be sent to the postoffice.

Having despatched the packet by a boy belonging to the house, Vincent took his hat and went out with the intention of calling upon his friend

Anderson, to whom he longed to communicate the good news he had in store for him. A few steps from the door he met Gray, who was on his way to Vincent's lodgings, and both returned to the house, where they remained till the hour of dinner, and then repaired to a neighbouring coffee-house to dine. This was the first time that Gray and Vincent had seen each other, since the morning that the latter was discharged from the custody of the police; for the former, having been unexpectedly called out of town, had been absent some days, which was his apology to his friend for having so long apparently neglected him.

"I have not been unmindful of you, though," said Gray, "for, during the last three days that I have been in town, I have several times called at the police-office to ascertain whether the person for whose crime you were arrested, has yet been caught. I am sorry to say that he is still at large, though I am assured by an officer that things are in such a train as to afford the hope that he will soon be taken. More than this I could not learn. Now, Vincent, if you have no objection, tell me what Fortune or your own exertions have done for you since we last met."

Charles then gave Gray an account of his intercourse with the Eldredges, not concealing the fact of his sudden dismissal from the advocate's service.

"From whom did he hear about the forgery?" asked Gray. "If I remember rightly, nothing was said about it in any of the papers."

"I cannot answer your question," replied Vin-

cent; "probably from the same person who conveyed the information to the police. But how he could have learned that I was in the employ of Mr. Eldredge, is a mystery to me; since I am not aware that any of my friends or acquaintance, excepting you, Mr. Wilmot, and Anderson, knew of my being engaged at his office."

"It would not be difficult to guess," said Gray, "whose hand inflicted the last blow as well as the first. There is a sharp eye watching your movements, and we must not rest till we shall have brought your persecutor within the reach of the law. My chief object in coming hither this morning, was to say that a friend of mine, who is extensively engaged in mercantile business, is in want of a competent bookkeeper, to take the place of one that has just left him. I have mentioned your name to him, as that of one possessing the qualifications necessary to a correct performance of the duties. If you are at present disengaged, I think the situation may be readily obtained, provided you and he can agree on the salary."

"That will not be a very difficult matter in my present circumstances; and, as I am doing nothing, and have no business in prospect, I should be extremely glad to secure the place."

"We will go immediately, then, and see what can be done. If you and my friend should be mutually pleased with each other, you will be able to commence to-day or to-morrow, to which, I presume, you have no objection."

On their way they met Brown, who saw them, but passed without a token of recognition. He was in company with another individual, who was unknown to both Vincent and Gray.

The gentleman whom they sought was fortunately in his counting-house, and was so much pleased with Vincent's appearance and conversation, that he agreed to take him for one month, with a view to test his ability. In the event of satisfaction being given, a salary was promised such as equalled Vincent's highest expectation. The merchant, who was a man of decision and energy, and, at the same time, a gentleman in his manners, apprized Charles that it would be expected that he should devote his whole time to the interest of the house; and requested him, if he liked the terms, to take his place at the desk on the following morning, as early as eight o'clock. Vincent promised his best exertions to please, and did not doubt of success.

This matter being arranged, Gray and Vincent separated. The latter went home full of gratitude to his friend, and in far better spirits than he had enjoyed since the moment he left his late employer. The same evening he held a long conversation with M'Gregor, and read with him several pages of Virgil, his favourite Latin author. Certain now of being beyond the reach of want, he listened with more than his usual patience—nay, even with a positive pleasure, to the pedantic prosing and tiresome repetitions of that amiable old scholar.

On the following morning, Vincent, pursuant to the arrangement, took possession of his new situa-

tion, and had the satisfaction to perceive that his efforts to perform his duties at the desk with neatness and despatch, were noticed and appreciated. Indeed, the head of the firm told him, that, if he continued as he had begun, he might consider his employment in their counting-room permanent, unless Vincent himself should voluntarily relinquish his situation. This, of course, was highly gratifying to Charles; yet there was a degree of uneasiness in his mind, arising from that feeling of insecurity produced by the association of his name with the crime which had already cost him two valuable engagements, and the mortification of an arrest.

On his way to dinner, he stopped at the post-office in expectation of receiving an answer from the editor; but there was no letter for him. During the succeeding three days, he went several times to the office with no better success; but, on the fourth day, a letter superscribed according to his directions, was put into his hand. The editor acknowledged the receipt of Vincent's production, praised its literary merits, and gave it as his decided opinion that it would not only interest the readers of his magazine, but obtain an enviable reputation for the writer. He begged to observe, however, that he was not in the practice of paying for contributions, for the reason that his subscription list would not admit of his expending anything for such purposes. There were numerous writers who generously wrote for him gratuitously; and if the merit of their productions was not of the highest order, it was certainly more profitable to publish them, than to purchase those that

were something better. For these reasons, and others that might be named, he felt himself under the disagreeable necessity of declining to remunerate his "new and very able contributor." He had, nevertheless, taken the freedom to put the article in type for the forthcoming number of the magazine, and should publish it unless peremptorily forbidden. He thanked the writer, and expressed the hope that he would frequently hear from him; promising that, to his communications, the most conspicuous pages in the magazine should always be assigned.

Vincent read the letter with feelings very different from those he would have experienced, had he not been so fortunate as to obtain a situation which promised to supply, in a very short time, all his pecuniary wants. He felt little real disappointment at receiving no money, although, at that moment, even a very few dollars would have been acceptable. He was much amused by the impudence of the man, in so coolly appropriating to his own use what had only been offered to him for sale; and, after a little reflection, he determined to forbid its publication, in order to teach the editor how important the difference is between *meum* and *tuum*. Having decided upon this, he penned a letter, in which he conveyed his thanks for the handsome manner in which his contribution had been spoken of, and desired that it might be returned to him through the postoffice; regretting, at the same time, that the editor had gone so far as to put it in type with a view to publication, without having first ascertained whether that course would be agreeable to the writer and owner of the article.

CHAPTER XIII.

VINCENT continued with the merchant during the month for which he had been engaged. He had been treated with the utmost kindness, which gave him reason to suppose that his services were in a good degree satisfactory to his employer. He had certainly been very attentive to his business, and had never been unnecessarily absent from the counting-room, in which there was always sufficient business to keep him constantly occupied.

When he had been with the house about a fortnight, he took the freedom to ask for a month's salary in advance, which was cheerfully granted. With this he paid a portion of his debts, and thus partially relieved his mind from the anxiety under which it had been labouring. He was not, however, by any means free from trouble, for there were other debts becoming due, which could only be punctually discharged by obtaining farther advances from his liberal employer. This he was reluctant to do, for the reason that it might produce an unfavourable impression, by exciting suspicion that he was deeply involved; and also because it is contrary to custom for clerks of good character to ask for their wages before they are due, except on extraordinary occasions, when satisfactory reasons can be assigned for making the request. He had already made one such request, and did not care to repeat it.

At the expiration of the month, Vincent was one evening visited by Gray, who came in with a sober countenance, and seated himself upon a chair without speaking. This extraordinary conduct surprised Charles, for it was the first time he had ever seen any manifestation of low spirits on the part of his lively and facetious friend.

"Something troubles you to-night, Gray," said Charles; "I hope your turn has not come to bear some of those ills that flesh is heir to. Allow me to ask the cause of your dejection?"

"Alas! Charley, the news I am the bearer of are the cause. The devil himself, I believe, is in arms against you; for he has again sent that bugbear—the forgery—to frighten your employer."

"Can it be possible! then I am again worse than a beggar!"

"Listen to me, Vincent, for I am commissioned by my friend—my silly friend, I might truly call him—to speak to you on this subject. The fact is, he has received an anonymous letter conveying such information as led him to make inquiries, not only of Mr. Wilmot and the justice before whom you were brought, but also of Mr. Eldredge. He is inclined to think you are innocent; but, learning that Mr. Eldredge had dismissed you, he decided to do the same; although he deeply regrets the supposed necessity, and feels so much on your account that he has not the heart personally to announce his decision to you. For that reason he came to me this afternoon, and requested, as a particular favour, that I would spare him the pain, by

having an interview with you myself in his behalf. He desired me to say a hundred things which it is not necessary to repeat; suffice it to observe, that he is perfectly satisfied with your conduct, dislikes to part with you, and, on your account, is extremely sorry that he feels himself obliged to take this step. The truth is, he fears you are guilty, and dares not longer employ you."

After hearing this, Vincent remained silent some time, absorbed in deep thought. At length he said, "There is but one thing for me to do, and that is to leave the city. It is impossible, I see, for me to live quietly here; and yet, if I go elsewhere, my persecutor, whoever he may be, might find out the place of my retreat, and follow me thither with his infernal machinations. Besides, it is uncertain how soon I might obtain employment; and how I should in the mean while subsist, my little stock of money being nearly exhausted, I do not know."

"I will lend you a sum," said Gray. "It will not be large, for I am poor myself; but to a portion of my spare cash you are welcome, till you can repay it without inconvenience. I agree with you in the opinion that you had better try your fortune in another city. You might go to Philadelphia or Boston, and live without much danger of being discovered by your secret enemy."

"I will reflect upon it, and decide to-morrow. I thank you, Gray, for your kind offer, but I dare not accept it, because I do not know when I should be able to refund the money."

"I think you observed that you are now *worse*

than a beggar. This implies that you are in debt. May I ask if such be the case?"

"It is. I am harassed by the thought that I owe a sum which it is out of my power to pay within the time allowed me, though my creditors have my promise that the money shall be forthcoming on the day their demands fall due. My word—which I would sacrifice my life rather than to break—was pledged when I had employment that would have afforded me the means of keeping it to the letter."

"Then I insist upon your taking what I can spare. It will put me to no inconvenience to loan you a hundred and fifty dollars, and if you return it within the next twelve or eighteen months, I shall be satisfied."

"That amount will more than enable me to fulfil my engagements. The balance, with strict economy, will support me for a time, perhaps till I can get something to do in another city. I accept your offer, Gray, with a thousand thanks; and I trust it will not be long before I can restore the money you so generously place at my disposal."

"Here it is, then. I thought you might want it, so I brought it with me. One thing more before I go. I have the anonymous letter alluded to a moment since. Look at it, if you please, and tell me whether that is the handwriting of the scoundrel Brown."

"It is not," replied Vincent, "and bears no resemblance to his writing; I question, too, whether this was even dictated by him; for there are words

here which are not his, or, rather, which I do not remember to have ever heard him use."

"He probably employed some person to write it for him," said Gray.

"But who would become a confederate in the persecution of one who is perhaps unknown to, and certainly never injured him, merely to gratify the malignant feelings of another?"

"There are men whose services in any transaction, however base, money will secure."

Vincent was now once more without an occupation, and without a dollar he could call his own. Averse to leaving New-York, where the only friends he had resided, he saw no way of avoiding the necessity of going among strangers to seek a livelihood which was denied him at home. He considered the subject well, weighing the reasons for and against the project; and finally came to the conclusion that he would go to Philadelphia as soon as he could make the necessary arrangements. One of his strongest objections to this move was the distance that would separate him from her whose image was enshrined in his heart, affording him, in all his hours of solitude and depression, an object of the most pleasing contemplation. The period of his sojourn at Beechwood, was to him as a green spot, or oasis, in the desert of life; and the recollection of his happiness there, associated as it was with that being who had wrought so signal a change in his tone of thought and feeling, was, amid all his troubles, a source of constant though

melancholy pleasure. Far removed by untoward circumstances from the remotest probability of ever being made happy in the possession of Clara Wilmot, he never ceased to foster the hope, that, by a course of industrious application to the business of life, he might one day raise himself so nearly to her level, as to entitle him to become a candidate for her hand. She it was that encouraged him to surmount every obstacle, and sustained him in moments of despondency, when disappointments and difficulty would otherwise have pressed him to the earth. When his spirits drooped, and he was almost ready to succumb, a single effort of memory recalling her beautiful features, her charming manners, the winning sweetness of her conversation, and that kindness which, he sometimes imagined, was closely allied to tenderness, inspired him with fresh vigour, and incited him to new efforts to overcome the adverse workings of fortune.

That night he remained up till a late hour, and about midnight M'Gregor, who had just closed the Greek Testament, opened the door softly, and, seeing Charles sitting with his head resting upon his hand, observed, "*Melancholia uteris*, Carole? why are you again so sad, my dear?"

"Things do not go right with me, preceptor," replied Charles.

"Ah, Charles, 'man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward;' or, as Castellio hath it in his elegant Latin version, '*Tam enim nascitur homo ad ærumnam, quam stricturæ naturaliter in sublime volant.*' Now I would counsel you, my dear, to

be vigilant in the perusal of the classics, for they operate as a balm to the wounded spirit. There is the advantage of education, Carole. Oh, I would not exchange my learning for the wealth of the Indies; nay, not for that of the whole world. What signify riches? we can eat but one dinner a day, and wear but one suit of apparel at a time; but learning, my dear, affords the mind, amid all the vicissitudes of life, a solid and enduring satisfaction. The poet says, that increase of care comes with increase of wealth. Do you remember the passage?"

"*Crescentem sequitur cura pecuniam,*" replied Vincent.

"Good! Carole," exclaimed the old man; "*macte virtute puer. Vale.*"

During the preceding three or four weeks, Vincent had several times called at Anderson's residence, but had not seen him, in consequence of his being absent from town, on important business connected with the office. Next morning after his interview with Gray, being again perfectly at leisure, he thought he would ascertain whether Anderson had yet returned; and while on the way to the lodgings of his friend, he was suddenly accosted by a man, whom he immediately recognised as old Barnes the fisherman.

"I hope you are well to-day, Mr. Vincent."

"Quite well, I thank you, Barnes; I scarcely need ask a person of your hale appearance whether he enjoys good health."

"Yes, sir, there's no mistake about my health,

that's a fact; but my poor old woman has been terribly out of sorts, though, thanks to Miss Clara, she's now better, and begins to go out. Hope you've got over your fall, sir."

"Entirely recovered. Are Mr. Wilmot's family all well?"

"Yes, sir, they are all well in health, but there's been some trouble among 'em. Brown's gone, you know. Mrs. Wilmot, I hear, lays it all to you, though I'm sorry to say so; and, some how or another, I don't know how it is, but things are not just as they ought to be. I haven't time to tell you anything more at present, for I'm going up in Mr. Wilmot's sailboat this morning, and, as the tide will serve in a quarter of an hour, it's necessary I should be off. Hope to see you at Beechwood before long, sir; and if you should like to sail again, we'll try not to get caught in another storm. By-the-way, our little miss had a narrow escape that time; and I've always said since that, if it hadn't been for you, there would have been a sorrowful house at Beechwood. That would have been a bad day's work for me, if she had been drowned, God bless her! I never could bear to think of it. Well, good-day Mr. Vincent."

"Stay one moment, Barnes. When do you come to New-York again?"

"I shall be down the day after to-morrow, for I've engaged to meet a man here about some money I'm owing him."

"Could you lodge me two nights at your house? I should like to be at Beechwood for a few hours."

"I understand you, sir; I always suspected that, and I've often said to my old woman that Clara and you—"

"I have my reasons," interrupted Vincent, "for not wishing to go to Mr. Wilmot's, which I will not now detain you to explain."

"It's because the old lady is a little out with you, I suppose; but, no matter, you're quite welcome to stay at my house, though you can't expect much from a poor man like me, sir. We live from hand to mouth like, as the old saying is, but I think we might manage to give you a clean pair of sheets, and a good dish of broiled fish if you are fond of 'em."

After leaving word with M'Gregor that he should be absent a day or two, Charles went down to the boat, and, being favoured by the tide and a good wind, they soon found themselves through Hell Gate, and approaching Beechwood at a rapid rate.

It was a beautiful day in early autumn, not uncomfortably warm, with a fine breeze and a cloudless sky; and Vincent, in spite of his destitute condition and the gloominess of his prospects, felt a degree of happiness approaching to rapture, in the thought of so soon meeting the object of his love. He scarcely permitted himself to question how she would receive him, or what she would think of a penniless and almost homeless person like himself, coming to Beechwood with no other purpose than to see her, the sole heiress of a gentleman of large fortune and high respectability. He seemed to feel the conviction, that Miss Wilmot

was sufficiently interested in his welfare, at least, to pardon what she might regard as an unwarrantable boldness on the part of so humble an individual as himself. Or, it might be, that he considered his eminent service to her, a sufficient excuse for the liberty of coming to Beechwood, before he should take his leave of New-York, to be absent, perhaps, for many years. Whatever he might have thought, however, certain it is that he looked for no repulse, no manifestation of pride; but, on the contrary, a reception as kind and as cordial as he could desire.

"Perhaps, sir," said Barnes, "you don't know how I came to say to my woman that you and Clara had a kind of notion for each other. Well, sir, I'll tell you. You see, when you had the extrornery good luck to pull her out of the water, it was nateral that she should feel gratitude and so forth; and when a young woman feels that way towards a young man, depend upon it her heart's gone: there's no two ways about it. Besides that, I could see exactly how she felt by her cheek; for that, you know, is a sort of thermometer, that tells how warm it is in the region of the heart. When you were staying at Beechwood, I mentioned your name one day, and said how thankful we ought to be to you for saving her life; and then she blushed so pretty, and said, 'yes, Barnes, that's true.' When she came back from the North she was a different woman. All her life seemed to have gone, and she scarcely ever laughed, though she was as kind to us as ever, and came every day

to see my poor sick wife. I couldn't think what ailed her, till I heard from Williams that you and Mr. Wilmot had parted; and then I said to my woman, says I, you may depend that Clara's soberness has something to do with that ere circumstance. I never got the right of the story, for I didn't quite like to ask her anything about it, because I saw clear enough that it pained her to hear your name mentioned; for one day, when I said to her what I had been told about you, she sighed, and, if my old eyes didn't deceive me, there was a tear rolled upon her cheek, and from that time I didn't need to be told which way the wind blew. (There's a pretty steamboat, sir; she goes to New-Haven, and beats everything on the river.)

"Well, as I was saying, Clara appeared to be anything but happy. No singing, no riding on horseback; and her waiting-maid, Jenny, told my wife that she hadn't played on the piany for wellnigh two months. You know she was mighty fond of music, and used to finger that instrument to kill; and, consequently, it must have been no small matter that kept her away from it. I've known her sit for hours together on the seat in the shady path, doing nothing that I could see. Sometimes I'd leave her when I went a fishing, and when I came back, there she was yet. This is different from what it used to be, when she was always as busy as a bee, and as lively as a cricket. I'm glad you're going to Beechwood, Mr. Vincent, for I'm sure that her little heart will leap for joy. I'm only sorry that Mrs. Wilmot has got that foolish

notion in her head about you. But, never mind, it'll all come round some day, I hope; for, if things go on so, I don't know what'll become of poor Clara."

Vincent, who was reclining in the bows of the boat shaded by the sail, listened with intense interest to Barnes's observations; and, when they were concluded, the thought of having inspired Miss Wilmot with a feeling akin to his own, threw him into an ecstasy of delight. Before this, he had only suspected, while he hoped, that such might be the case; but Barnes had furnished satisfactory evidence that she loved him. His impatience to behold her, to confess to her his passion, knew no bounds; and he fixed his eager eyes upon Beechwood, now just coming into view, and endeavoured to descry the mansion imbosomed in its grove of tall trees, visiting in imagination its beautiful inmate, and listening with rapture to the melodious sound of her voice.

At length they approached so near as to be able to distinguish objects on shore with some degree of certainty; and while he gazed, a female figure passed over the lawn, and was soon hidden by the line of trees that overshadowed the path leading from the mansion to Barnes's house. "Heavens!" he exclaimed; "if that should be Clara on her daily visit to the invalid wife of the fisherman, only a few minutes will suffice to carry me into her presence. Gods!" thought he, "what happiness will be mine, if she should not spurn me when I shall confess that my sole object in coming hither was to

behold once more her angelic face, and to hear again the unequalled music of her speech! if she should listen without offence to my declaration of love, and perhaps even deign to tell me that my passion is returned! Pshaw!" said he to himself, after a short pause, "how ridiculous it is in me to think of saying such things to Clara Wilmot!"

As soon as the boat struck the wharf, Vincent leaped on shore, flew over the beach, and, in a moment, entered the humble dwelling of the fisherman. He was not disappointed. Clara was standing there with a little basket on her arm, in which she had brought some delicacy for Mrs. Barnes. She was clad in a very plain manner, her dress being of calico, fitted with much nicety to her exquisite figure; and she wore a large straw bonnet, remarkable more for its size than its beauty, though it became her exceedingly well. Her black and glossy locks hung beneath it, shadowing the pure complexion of her perfectly formed neck and shoulders. She was much paler than usual, a fact that Vincent noticed with some surprise, although he had been apprized by Barnes that a few weeks had wrought a striking change in her handsome countenance. Though the colour had vanished from her cheeks, she appeared, in other respects, in perfect health.

When Clara first saw him, a slight degree of surprise for an instant showed itself, which, however, soon gave place to a just perceptible smile, as she extended her hand to him and replied to his inquiry after her health.

"You are, doubtless, much astonished to see me

here, Miss Wilmot," said Charles; "and, in truth, I may say that I am not free from astonishment at finding myself in your presence; since I did not, three hours ago, expect so soon to have this pleasure."

"I confess," replied Clara, "that your coming hither was quite unlooked for."

"My apology, then, must be, that I am about to go to Philadelphia to reside, perhaps for many years; and having a strong desire to see my friends before I depart, I embraced the opportunity of coming up with Barnes, in order to take my leave of you. Our meeting to-day in New-York was quite accidental, and I could not resist the temptation of accompanying him hither, to bid you farewell."

Clara looked down and made no reply, evidently at a loss to decide how to act. She could not omit inviting him to the mansion, yet the feelings of her mother towards him, rendered it improper for her to take him home. She was not aware that Vincent was already informed of his having forfeited the good opinion of Mrs. Wilmot; consequently she supposed that he would naturally expect from her an invitation to stop at Beechwood during his brief visit. What course to pursue, therefore, under the peculiar circumstances, she did not know, unless to state frankly, that, owing to the hostility of her mother, it would not be prudent to appear immediately at the mansion; or, at least, that she dared not ask him to attend her there, without first warning him to look for a cool reception from Mrs. Wilmot.

Charles soon put her at ease by adding, after a

short pause, that, knowing her mother's feelings in regard to him, he had come with the intention of remaining with Barnes, who had promised to accommodate him for a night or two. "I shall not, therefore," continued he, "expect anything like an explanation from you of the cause which, I am aware, will prevent your inviting me to Beechwood; and I desire, as a particular favour, you will not let it be known that I am here. It would afford me the highest pleasure to efface the unfavourable impression which my late unfortunate intercourse with your cousin has made on Mrs. Wilmot's mind; but I shall despair of success, in consequence of the exertions of your father in my behalf, having failed to change her opinion. I see you are ready to go; let me no longer detain you. Allow me to accompany you part of the distance."

They left the house after this short dialogue, walked a considerable way along the shaded path, and seated themselves in the same spot in which we saw them together during Charles's first visit to Beechwood. Vincent then proceeded to give Clara some account of his collision with Brown, and its unhappy results up to the preceding evening. She listened with intense interest to the recital; an interest quite as great as if she had not before heard the major part of the same history from the lips of her father. If there had been in her mind a lingering doubt of the propriety of his conduct, this narration of facts, with the colouring he gave, would have removed it entirely. She overlooked those

points which were deserving of censure, and regarded his part in the affair with Brown (though she did not acknowledge it) as, in all respects, praiseworthy and proper.

Much of their conversation turned upon the forgery and its consequences, and scarcely extended to any other subject. Before they parted, Charles begged the favour of another interview, which Clara unhesitatingly granted; as she expected, on the following morning, to go over again to Barnes's, at which time he would undoubtedly have an opportunity to see her.

During this brief meeting, Vincent perceived that, although Clara had lost some of her vivacity, the characteristics of her conversation and manners still remained. While she pitied him, she could not resist the temptation to rally him occasionally, and to turn into pleasant ridicule whatever she discovered in his conduct susceptible of it. This sort of fun, however, she did not relish so much as formerly, as was apparent from the effort it cost her; but it served, perhaps, to conceal her real feelings, and to prevent the appearance of anything like sympathy.

Vincent returned to the house satisfied with his reception, and more than ever in love with his amiable friend; while she walked slowly away in the opposite direction, reflecting upon what had just passed, and regretting the necessity he was under of absenting himself from New-York.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEXT morning Clara visited her patient as usual. This done, she and Vincent retired to a small green a few rods from the house, shaded by a cluster of oak-trees, which were the termination of the woods belonging to Mr. Wilmot's estate. Here they availed themselves of a rude seat constructed by Barnes for his own accommodation, and where he was frequently seen sleeping, repairing his fishing-tackle, or cleaning his gun; for he was something of a sportsman as well as a fisherman, and was reckoned a dead shot in duck and snipe shooting.

"If I understand you rightly," said Clara, "you ascribe the loss of your places in both instances to the machinations of my cousin. Allow me to ask what your reasons are for supposing it was he that wrote the letters of which you spoke."

"There is no other person to whom they can reasonably be attributed. Some information was contained in them possessed by no one else, excepting your father, Mr. Wray, and the officers of the bank; none of whom, I am sure, would do anything to injure me."

"What motive could actuate Richard to play so base a part towards an old friend and fellow-clerk? He is not, it is true, the most amiable man in the world; but I have ever considered him honourable, and above doing a mean action. I would

not willingly believe that I have been deceived in his character."

"He took offence during my visit with him to Beechwood, and I have reason to think that his present hostility to me, had its origin in the obvious partiality with which I had the honour to be entertained by your family."

"Is it possible you can suppose that my cousin would envy a guest of my father, because the same degree of attention was paid to both?"

"I saw enough, even then, to convince me that he was jealous of my reception; a feeling that was augmented by my good fortune in rescuing you from a perilous situation, and still more by one of the consequences of that act, the invitation to accompany you to Saratoga."

"Would he have been satisfied, think you, had you suffered me to drown; and could he reasonably complain that my parents endeavoured to show their gratitude for so signal a service? You certainly must be wrong in imputing to him feelings so unworthy."

"You do not yet know all, Miss Wilmot; Brown was unnecessarily jealous of me on another ground. He loves you; he has, I am quite sure, long loved you; and he soon came to regard me as a rival to be feared."

"You a rival to be feared! Pray, how do you make it out that you can possibly stand in my cousin's way?"

"You misunderstand me; I simply remarked that he dreaded me as a rival; and I now add, that

his fears were groundless; and that, had he properly estimated his advantages, he would have seen no reason to fear the rivalry of so humble an individual as myself."

A pause here ensued, during which Clara's eyes were upon the ground, while she employed her parasol in scratching lines upon the soil.

"But Brown," continued Vincent, "deserves credit for some penetration. He thought he saw in my language and manners decided evidence of my strong admiration of you. In this he was not mistaken. He imagined, too, that you preferred me to him—"

"In that he was not mistaken, I suppose," said Clara, smiling, while a faint blush overspread her cheek.

"It is not for me to say," replied Vincent; "but I hope he judged correctly in both cases."

"And if he did, what could it avail you?"

"Naught, I am aware; but it would be a pleasant thought, and one that would cheer many a future hour of gloomy solitude, that you once deigned to entertain for me a sentiment different from that of mere friendship. And now that I have unexpectedly approached the topic nearest my heart, I cannot refrain from declaring, at the hazard of offending you, that, from an early period of my visit to Beechwood, I have loved you constantly, fervently."

"And all this time you have let 'concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on your damask cheek.'"

"You jest, Miss Wilmot. I did not make this confession with the slightest expectation that one

of a similar character would follow from you. It was the chief object of my coming hither to see you once more, to bid you adieu—"

"So you have remarked once before," interrupted Clara, with an arch expression.

"And perhaps," continued Vincent, "to make this declaration, though I was sensible that the distance between us precludes the hope that I shall ever inspire you with a feeling akin to that which burns in my bosom. All I ask, Miss Wilmot, is that you will pardon this freedom, and sometimes remember me as one who can never cease to regard the hours passed in your society as the happiest of his life."

"You are very moderate in your requests, truly."

"To ask more would only, I fear, subject me to the pain of a denial."

"Would there be any harm in trying?" asked Clara, walking down the bank a few steps, as if to catch a better view of a passing steamer.

"Is it possible," exclaimed Vincent, "that you deign to give me a word of encouragement, or do I misapprehend the purport of your language?"

At this moment the discharge of a gun was heard from the adjoining thicket, followed by a scream from Clara, who turned and saw that Vincent was bleeding profusely from the arm. The ball had struck him just above the left wrist. Charles was in the act of raising his hand to his head, which brought the lower part of the left arm nearly in front of his heart; consequently, the shot must have been designed to kill him on the spot.

Barnes and his son were soon by his side, and Vincent was taken into the house. Clara, accompanied by the boy, hastened to Beechwood, whence the latter was instantly despatched for a physician. Mr. Wilmot, on hearing what had happened, repaired immediately to the spot, and gave orders to have Vincent conveyed to the mansion; at the same time, he sent two men to scour the woods, with a view to secure the villain who had fired the shot. These men returned after an unsuccessful search, and stated that the bars on the other side of the woods were down, and fresh prints of a horse's feet visible on the road; but that they saw no person, excepting a boy belonging to the next farm, who had heard the report of a gun, but seen nothing to excite his suspicion.

The physician examined the wound and extracted the ball, an operation which caused the patient much pain, in consequence of the peculiar position of the lead and the difficulty of seizing it, added to the unskilfulness of the operator, to whom this was a new business. The ball was at length taken out and the wound dressed. No very serious results were apprehended, but a confinement of a fortnight or three weeks was inevitable.

It may well be supposed, that Vincent now felt his situation to be extremely awkward. His coming to Beechwood and remaining at Barnes's without the knowledge of Mr. Wilmot and his lady; his being in conversation with their daughter at the time he received his wound, and the want of a kindly feeling towards him on the part of Mrs. Wilmot,

were circumstances calculated to render the predicament he was in peculiarly uncomfortable. He sought an early opportunity to make the necessary explanation, and assigned, as his reason for not coming direct to the mansion, Mr. Wilmot's own request that he would not appear there, while Mrs. Wilmot's unfavourable opinion remained unchanged. He then gave a history of his connexions with Mr. Eldredge and the merchant who had last employed him, and stated that he had determined to go to Philadelphia, in order to place himself, if possible, beyond the reach of his persecutor. Under these circumstances, and in view of, perhaps, a protracted absence, he confessed that he was desirous to see Clara once more, and for that purpose ventured to take passage with Barnes, whom he accidentally met in New-York.

During this interview with Mr. Wilmot, Brown's name was not mentioned. It was well known to the former that Vincent suspected Richard of being the instigator, if not the perpetrator, of all the mischief; and in relating the history of the few preceding weeks, Charles purposely refrained from even alluding to him, leaving Mr. Wilmot to draw his own conclusions. This communication, it was apparent, made a deep impression upon the gentleman to whom it was addressed. He remained silent some time in a thoughtful attitude, but said nothing which enabled Charles to decide, whether he was thinking of Brown as the probable originator of all the late proceedings, or reflecting upon Vincent's clandestine visit to Clara. Both these subjects were well calculated to engage his serious attention, whe-

ther in the capacity of a guardian or a father; and Charles, as he sat in the armchair, watched his sober countenance with no small degree of anxiety. He feared that he had not quite satisfied his friend as to his motive in coming to Beechwood; for he regarded the probability of his ever being united to Clara as so remote, that he did not wish Mr. Wilmot even to suspect the existence of love between them.

Mrs. Wilmot, contrary to Charles's expectations, treated him with great civility, and exerted herself night and day to make him comfortable. She was too well-bred to act differently towards a person circumstanced as he was; and, knowing this, he could not judge whether her conduct should be ascribed to a sudden change her feelings might have undergone, or to an imperious necessity imposed by her character of hostess. During his confinement, no opportunity presented of talking privately with her, nor did he on any occasion converse with Clara, excepting in the presence of a third person. This never seemed to be the result of a previous arrangement, but the effect of pure accident; yet there was no doubt in his mind, that both mother and daughter, from different motives, purposely avoided being alone with him for a single moment. Clara wished to do nothing calculated to confirm any suspicion that Vincent's visit might have excited. It was not her intention to deceive her parents, for she was too ingenuous and frank to harbour such a thought; but never having admitted to herself the possibility of a matrimonial alliance with Vincent, she deemed it not improper to conceal her admiration of him, even from her mother.

When Charles had so far recovered as to be able to walk abroad, he told Mr. Wilmot one day that he should like to go to New-York, in order to arrange for his departure to Philadelphia.

"And if you should go," said Mr. Wilmot, "what would you be able to do while your arm is in its present condition, supposing you were to be so fortunate as to find employment?"

"I can write very easily even now; and my wound is healing so fast, that, in a fortnight, I think, it will be quite well."

"May I ask, Charles, whether you have sufficient money to support you comfortably, till you shall have obtained an occupation of some kind?"

"To confess the truth, sir, I have no money that I can call my own. My ordinary expenses, added to some debts contracted in anticipation of permanent employment by Mr. Eldredge, have consumed all my earnings, and left me obligated for a small amount which I am at present unable to discharge."

"Then I insist upon your drawing on me, or, rather, on your own funds, for all you may need; nay, no refusal—no thanks—nothing of the kind, for I will not listen. I shall get you out of this difficulty *malgré vous*, and you must remain here at least another week. After that we shall see what can be done."

The same day Charles received a letter from M'Gregor, who had been duly notified that an accident had happened to Vincent, which might detain him several weeks in the country. The following is a copy of this characteristic epistle:

"CAROLE CARISSIME,

"Your message was delivered to me, and right sorry I am, my dear, to learn that you have been wounded, or, to express the same idea in Latin, *Tædet me cognoscere te saucium;* or, *miseret me,* &c., for we might use either word; but I confess that the former appears to me preferable. I would write the whole of this, for your benefit, in that noble tongue, but that I have not so much time as I could wish for the task, by reason of my having been so long occupied to-day with the first three verses of the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. (Observe, Carole, that I say the *first three* instead of the very common expression *three first;* for you know there can be but *one first,* though there may be a *first three,* a *second,* and a *third three.* Remember this. I believe that I have before hinted it to you.)

"You did not transmit to me a particular account of the disaster, whereby I might understand the nature and extent of your injury; nor did you say whether the upper or lower arm had been the recipient of the shot or ball. (Do your emember what the word *recipient* is derived from? *re* and *capio,* to take again or back, literally; or *recipiens* the participle. See how words come into use, my dear. When you are reading, frequently ask yourself the question, *Unde derivatur hoc verbum?* and then try to discover what word it may have come from, or of what it may be composed. This is the way to make yourself a scholar, Carole.) I was, therefore, much alarmed when I heard the distressing

news, fearing that the wound might, through the want of skilful management, prove to be very serious, if not fatal. May Heaven avert such a result!

"I had it in contemplation to visit you; but, as I did not know how to get to Beechwood (pretty name for an estate: what is it in Latin?), and wanting the requisite sum of money or pecunia, I concluded that I would endite an epistle, which, in truth, might be more acceptable to you than a visit in propria persona. (The accent in persona is on the penultimate syllable.)

"Last night, after I had finished my studies, this subject occupied my thoughts, and I queried with myself what motive could have actuated the individual who had the audacity (from the Latin *audax*) to put your life in jeopardy. His mind could not have been under the influence of religion, otherwise he never would have so disregarded the divine precepts, as to do an act so unworthy of a true Christian. After thoroughly weighing the matter, I came to the conclusion that he must have been a bad man; one of exceedingly loose principles, and no scholar. I would, therefore, counsel you to eschew his society, and thus give him no cause to repeat the attempt upon your life.

"I would recommend you, Carole, to improve the leisure you now have, in reading the ancient authors. The time spent in studying them could not be put to a better use; for we of the old countries (as I have before hinted to you) set a high value upon those writings, and peruse them with much more attention than the Americans bestow. The

people of the United States are so worldly in their views and aspirations, that they do not generally apply themselves to the languages with that ambition to excel in learning, which characterizes the scholars of the Old World in general, and of Scotland in particular. I believe I have said something like this before.

"Wishing you a speedy recovery, I must conclude, as a text in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians occurs to me, which I shall immediately examine. Speaking of the epistles reminds me that I have nearly filled my folio volume with observations, critical and explanatory, on the writings of St. Paul. Some day I will loan it to you. *Vale; stude diligenter, Carole.*

"I remain your friend and preceptor,

"M'Gregor.

"Postscriptum. On reviewing this letter, I find that I have used the word *pecunia.* Do you remember whence it was derived? I shall repeat the question when I see you, and I hope you will be prepared with a correct answer. M'G."

While Vincent remained at Beechwood, Jasper came over frequently, and was assiduous in his attention to Clara. He had recently grown much bolder, and ventured to visit without his sister or mother; though both these, particularly the latter, sometimes accompanied him to Mr. Wilmot's.

Charles saw no reason to fear Jasper, for it was quite apparent from Clara's manners that success on Jenks's part was impossible. Mrs. Jenks, how-

ever, had sufficient penetration to discover how matters stood between Miss Wilmot and Vincent; and she determined, if such a thing were possible, to interfere in behalf of her son, and to cause his rival to be removed. She knew that Mrs. Wilmot disliked Charles, and that it would not be difficult to alarm her fears, by hinting the probability of an attachment's growing up between him and Clara. No sooner did this stratagem occur to her, than she sought an opportunity to put it in practice. One day she came to Beechwood, and requested the favour of a private interview with its mistress. This was granted.

"I have come over to-day, Mrs. Wilmot, on business of the greatest importance to you. It does not concern me, to be sure; but, then, we are *so* intimate, you know, that I couldn't see any member of your family in danger without informing you of it."

"In danger!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmot; "pray explain yourself. Who is in peril?"

"Listen to me," said Mrs. Jenks, assuming an air of much gravity, and throwing into her countenance an expression of great seriousness; "are you sure that no person can overhear us? for I would not, for the world, have any person suppose that I interfered. I never meddle with other people's matters; but, in this case, on account of our intimacy, it is my duty to tell you all I know about this affair of Clara's."

"Of Clara's! an affair of Clara's, did you say? what affair?"

"With Vincent: it's come to a serious pass already, Mrs. Wilmot."

"You astonish me, Mrs. Jenks; pray go on, and not keep me in suspense."

"You must know, then," continued the other, drawing her chair near to Mrs. Wilmot, "that I have long suspected that your daughter is attached to Vincent; and that *he* loves *her*, was just as plain to me as the nose on a man's face. Well, the day that he came up, my boy Jim, who is a cute fellow, had just come in from fishing, and, as he was crossing the path that leads down to Barnes's, who should he see but Clara and Vincent walking slowly along, arm-in-arm."

"Arm-in-arm!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmot; "can it be possible! Are you sure the boy was not mistaken?"

"Wait till I tell you the whole, and then you may judge for yourself. He got behind a clump of bushes near the little seat, and when they sat down, of course he could hear and see all that passed. Well, the first thing Vincent did was to put his arm round Clara's neck and kiss her. He told her that he was going on a visit to Philadelphia, and that he had come to see her before he went, but dared not show his face at Beechwood, because he knew that you hated him. Then they agreed to meet again on the following morning after breakfast. Now, as soon as Jim told me what he had seen and heard, I says to myself, 'this aint right, and I must find out what it's all coming to,

and let Mrs. Wilmot know; for I don't believe she cares about Clara's meeting a young man privately.' So I told my boy that he must be on the spot bright and early, and listen with all the ears he had, and not lose a single word of what they said. I promised him a quarter dollar if he had plenty to tell when he came back. Well, when Jim returned, he was all but frightened out of his wits, for he thought that Vincent had been killed. He said that Clara and Vincent came out of Barnes's, and went round under the high trees and sat down where they thought nobody could see them. There they put their arms round each other, and began to talk, every now and then stopping to kiss. All this while Jim said he lay snug in the bushes, and never stirred hand or foot; but he could hear every word they said, though they didn't speak very loud. Vincent told her a long rigmarole about his troubles, and how he was obliged to go to Philadelphia; and then said he loved her so much, that he couldn't think of leaving without first coming to see his dear Clara—"

"Dear Clara!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmot.

"Dear Clara; those were the very words; you may ask Jim. Then he told her how miserable he should be away from her, and took her hand and kissed it, and she never once told him to quit. This, I thought, looked as if it was getting to be a serious matter; but it's no business of mine, you know, and I shouldn't have said a word about it only that, as we are so intimate—"

"That you feel yourself entitled to pry into my

daughter's affairs," interrupted Mrs. Wilmot. "You have been imposed upon, Mrs. Jenks, by this Jim of yours; I do not credit one half that you have told me."

Mrs. Wilmot was left in a state of great uneasiness by what she had just heard. She was perfectly confident that Mrs. Jenks had coloured and exaggerated to suit her own purpose; but she also knew that Clara and Vincent had twice met, and thought it, therefore, quite probable that some tender expression had been made by them and overheard by the eavesdropper Jim. The interview had the effect designed, namely, to incense Mrs. Wilmot against Vincent to the point of making her unwilling that he should remain any longer at Beechwood. She went immediately to her husband and repeated the substance of Mrs. Jenks's communication; but Mr. Wilmot smiled, and begged her not to be disturbed by such arrant nonsense.

"I must request you, my dear," said Mrs. Wilmot, "no longer to insist upon Vincent's remaining with us; for, really, he is so odious to me, that it is only with the greatest difficulty I can treat him with common civility. Do what you like for him, since he is such a favourite of yours, only let him leave Beechwood as soon as he will."

"Make yourself quite easy on that point," replied Mr. Wilmot; "Vincent goes to New-York to-morrow."

CHAPTER XV.

NEXT day Vincent returned to the city. M'Gregor informed him that a woman, who had declined leaving her name or saying where she lived, had twice called, having been directed there by Mr. Wray, to whom she had applied to learn where Charles might be found. While they were conversing the woman again appeared. She was a tall, gaunt female, about fifty years of age, shabbily dressed, yet with an attempt at something more than decency; and there was that in the expression of her countenance, which would arrest the attention of the most cursory observer. Her eyes were large, dark, and deep-set; her skin yellow, as if from the effects of disease; and her cheeks were sunken to a degree that gave a singular character to the whole face. She wore a hat of very common material, but of ample dimensions, and she had under it a filthy and tattered cap made of the richest lace, and tied with a broad scarlet riband. Her hair was very gray, and two large locks, growing low on her forehead, had escaped from her cap, and hung on each side of her face below the chin. In her hands she held a book, a bag, and a parasol, which had long since seen its best days, and which came quite too late to be of any service in shielding its owner's complexion from the effects of the sun.

When this strange figure entered the door, she stood a while without speaking, looking with great earnestness at Vincent, and moving neither a muscle nor a limb. Her countenance, he thought, was not unknown to him; but where or under what circumstances he had seen it, he could not remember. The singularity of her conduct induced him to suppose that she was either partially insane, or endeavoured, by assuming the air and appearance of a maniac, to excite sympathy and obtain money. Having endured her scrutiny as long as he thought proper, he asked her, in a mild tone, who she was, and what was the nature of her business.

"Your name, if I mistake not," said she, in a hollow, sepulchral voice, "is Charles Vincent?"

"It is, my good woman: if it is I that you seek, pray let me know why you have come hither. You are a stranger to me, yet you seem to know who I am."

"I do, young man," said she, taking off his hat; "yes, it is he—the same forehead—eyes—hair—complexion; great God! what have you not cost me, boy, since the days of your infancy!"

"This is strange language," observed Vincent; "pray explain yourself. Who are you, in Heaven's name?"

"*Insanis est!*" exclaimed M'Gregor, retreating to the other side of the room, and showing indubitable signs of fear; "*et ob causam eam timenda*, Carole."

"My business, Mr. Vincent," said the woman,

without noticing the old gentleman's move, "is with you alone; and if you will favour me with a private interview, I can reveal something that may be interesting to you and a relief to me. If you should not find my story worth the time it will consume in being told, I will leave you whenever you shall command me to be gone. What say you?"

"I will listen to you, my good woman, though I cannot imagine what you can possibly have to communicate that will interest me. We shall be alone in the adjoining room: follow me."

Vincent and his visiter having seated themselves, the latter proceeded to remove her shawl and hat, as if she were preparing to spend the remainder of the day with him. Seeing this, he began to repent of having so easily made himself a listener, perhaps, to nothing more than a beggar's tale.

"With your permission, Charles (allow me this familiar style of address), I shall commence with a short history of myself. Should I make it too long, stop me, if you please, and I will immediately proceed to what more particularly concerns yourself.

"I am the daughter of a gentleman who was many years ago a wealthy planter, residing near one of the chief towns in Virginia. I received a good education, and lived at home happy and respected, until I was nearly nineteen years of age. I had a brother some years older than myself, who possessed a fortune independent of his father, and who, being plentifully supplied with money from that source, became a spendthrift, and an adept in

almost every description of vice. William was particularly fond of horses, attended all the races, and knew many of the loose characters that swarm at such places. He had often persuaded me to accompany him; but my father, whose principles did not permit him to countenance such exhibitions, invariably interfered and refused to let me go. My brother's accounts of these sports rendered me very desirous to see a race, and I resolved to attend the next one with him in spite of my parent's objections. When the time arrived, I left the house alone, and William, in his chaise, overtook me about a mile distant. On the ground I attracted much attention, for in early life I was not destitute of personal beauty; though, from my present emaciated appearance, you could hardly believe that I had ever been an attractive object. Thirty years, you perceive, have not passed over me without leaving their blighting effects. But time alone did not work the change.

"I was soon surrounded by a crowd of dashing fellows of my brother's acquaintance, who sought and obtained an introduction to me. Among them was a young man named Jenkins, who was about my own age, handsome, and exceedingly agreeable in his manners. He became very attentive, and remained with me nearly the whole day, scarcely leaving my side. Before we parted, he asked permission to pay his respects to me at my father's house; and my brother anticipated my reply by giving him an invitation to visit us, whenever he should feel inclined. On our way home, William

told me that Jenkins was the only son of a gentleman residing ten miles from us; that he was well educated, rich, and in all respects entitled to associate with the best families in the state.

"Mr. Jenkins came next day, and exerted himself to make an impression. He was not unsuccessful. I thought him the most accomplished, as well as the most agreeable young fellow I had ever seen. He spoke three languages, and played the piano with consummate skill. He came again and again, every time leaving me more deeply enamoured of him, till at length my father, who was jealous of William's companions, began to inquire into Jenkins's character, family, and circumstances. The result was unsatisfactory, and he requested me no longer to receive my lover's attentions, stating that, if I refused, he would take it upon himself to put a period to our intimacy. I was too much attached to my admirer to heed this command; and the peremptoriness of my father provoked me to the point of determining, at every hazard, to encourage the pleasing intercourse with my lover. Finding me resolved not to obey him in this particular, he sought an early opportunity of speaking to Mr. Jenkins, and requesting him to visit me no more. It was in vain the young man averred that his intentions were honourable; that he was respectable, well-connected, and rich; and that our attachment had become so strong, that it could not be broken without rendering us both unhappy. My father was inexorable, and persisted in his refusal to allow the acquaintance to continue.

"After this we met secretly, and were soon engaged to be married. William took part against my father, and was not only cognizant of, but sanctioned, Jenkins' clandestine visits. He even assisted in planning our secret interviews, approved my acceptance of Jenkins' hand, and proposed an elopement as the surest way of accomplishing our wishes. To this I reluctantly consented; and, in quitting my father's house, I abandoned my parents for ever. My lover and I left Virginia, but not to be married! He refused to fulfil his engagement, having attained his object on easier terms; and as I was destitute of money and without a home, I was compelled, as a matter of necessity, to live with him as his mistress. Bitterly did I deplore the consequences of my rash step, and gladly would I have returned to my father's roof, could I have gone thither unpolluted, and with the virgin purity of which I had been despoiled.

"I subsequently learned from Jenkins himself, that my father's estimate of his character was perfectly correct. His family, indeed, were highly respectable, but he was a shameless profligate, who lived on the profits of gambling and other vices; and who, after ruining my brother and bringing him largely in debt, agreed to release him, and even to restore a large sum of money, provided William would consent to his marrying me. This my brother did only on condition of my lover's promising to abandon his evil courses; a promise which Jenkins readily gave, without any intention (as he after-

ward confessed) of keeping his word. It was long, too, before William could be induced to listen to the proposed alliance, and not till Jenkins had succeeded, by the means I have named, in drawing him completely within his power.

"We lived in Philadelphia a short time, where Jenkins became acquainted with two men named John Tyrrel and Ralph Smith. These scoundrels were in all respects equal to Jenkins in crime, and they agreed to pursue their depredations on society for their common benefit. None of them laboured in his vocation exclusively on his own account, but shared all his profits, however obtained, with his co-partners in wickedness. What one planned the others would sometimes execute; and it rarely happened that they were unsuccessful in their desperate enterprises. Their appearance was that of gentlemen, and, with the exception of Smith, they had once moved in respectable circles. Smith was uneducated and rather low-bred; but he was tolerated by the others in consequence of his courage and skill.

"Becoming weary of the city, Jenkins procured me a small place in the country, where, except during his visits, I lived for a long period with no other companions than my books. He often found it necessary to retire thither with his co-labourers in crime, after having committed those daring acts which rendered it hazardous to remain in or near the city. At such times, our house, which was situated at the foot of a mountain in a remote part of the country, was frequently the scene of revelry and confusion, and sometimes of bickerings

and dangerous quarrels. Then, perhaps, would succeed several weeks spent in quiet conversation, reading, and riding on horseback; and could any stranger have seen us during our more tranquil moments, he would not have imagined that he beheld a party of greater desperadoes than the state prison itself could produce.

"When I had been there some years, Jenkins, with his comrades, after a longer absence than usual, returned to the country, bringing with them an infant child. They had attempted to rob the house of Mr. Edward Aubrey, which stands on the banks of the Delaware; but, being disturbed, they were compelled to decamp with no other booty than a babe that Jenkins had the audacity to snatch from its mother's arms. At the moment it occurred to him that such a prize would enable him to extort a large sum of money from the father, who was a man of immense wealth. In this he was successful; for, having promised to restore the child upon condition that a certain sum should previously be placed within his reach, he possessed himself of the money, but did not fulfil his part of the contract. This child was the cause of a serious quarrel among our company, Tyrrel insisting that it should be restored to its parents, while Jenkins and Smith opposed him on the ground that it would be to them a constant source of wealth. It was their intention ultimately to accede to Tyrrel's wishes, but not till they had obtained all the money that Mr. Aubrey would be likely to pay. Tyrrel persisted in his determination that it should be done immediately, and the others at length as-

sented, promising that no time should be lost in sending back the infant.

"At first it was my wish also that the child should be restored, not only because the deed was too base for me to sanction, but because the babe was likely to become a burden which I did not at all covet. Gradually, however, I became warmly attached to it; and having learned that its mother did not long survive its loss, I not only ceased to urge the restoration, but actually refused to let it go. Jenkins was so hardened that, as he was incapable of feeling anything like affection, so he was perfectly regardless about the fate of the little innocent.

"As Tyrrel did not come to the country again till after the lapse of more than three years, he had no opportunity of discovering that a deception had been practised upon him, in regard to the promised return of the infant. He had been told that it was again in the possession of its parents, and he believed the assertion; consequently, when he again visited us, the child he saw, then more than three years of age, was easily passed upon him as my own. One circumstance removed every cause of suspicion. The better to deceive him, Jenkins, about the time he stole the infant, told him it was a girl, and such he always believed it to be: the one he now saw running about the floor and calling me mamma, was a fine healthful boy.

"Weary of the country, I removed to Philadelphia, where I continued to live with Jenkins more than five years. At length he committed a forgery by which he obtained a large sum of money; and

wishing to rid himself of so unprofitable a burden as I was, he made this crime an excuse to go South, leaving me scarcely sufficient to support me and the child a single week. This obliged me to do something for a livelihood, and in what was I so likely to be successful as in a career of crime? I made an effort at the outset to possess myself, fraudulently, of so much property, as would obviate the necessity of doing the like again. I was detected, tried, and sentenced to the state prison for five years. The child was taken by the officers of justice, and placed in the house provided for public paupers, where he remained about two years, and then ran away. Many times I was on the point of telling who he was, that he might be sent to his father; but, feeling exasperated at the whole world, for the degradation to which my own foolish conduct had subjected me, I kept the secret, and thus, in some degree, gratified my thirst of revenge.

"When my term had expired, I came directly to New-York, where I found Tyrrel, who was still associated with his old companions, Jenkins having long before returned from the South. I told him that I was poor, and that he must support me: he consented without hesitation, knowing the consequences of a refusal. With Tyrrel I have lived till within the last two months.

"When I had been about two years in this city I accidentally discovered where the boy lived; and having ascertained that he had a good situation and was doing exceedingly well, I determined not to make

myself known to him, lest by doing so I might again be brought into difficulty. Circumstances of recent occurrence have made it necessary to inform you, that YOU, sir, are that son of Mr. Aubrey who was stolen by Jenkins, and who lived with me till you were nearly nine years of age."

"Good God!" exclaimed Vincent, "can this be true? I have no recollection of your face; yet I remember distinctly that of the woman whom I then believed to be my mother, and whom I one day visited in prison. But, now that I scrutinize your features more closely, I can trace a faint resemblance to those I once so dearly loved. Heavens! how changed!"

"You may well say that, Mr. Aubrey; remorse, crime, a prison, are no preservers of beauty; but, haggard and ugly as I am, I have a heart not wholly devoid of proper feelings, otherwise I should not have troubled myself to seek you in the days of your adversity."

"Do you know aught of my recent history?" asked Vincent, for we shall continue to use the name we are now familiar with.

"My eyes have been upon you, and I have watched the doings of those who have striven night and day to crush you. They shall find, before I have done with them, that they cannot injure you and trample me with impunity. These men have been my destroyers; they have made me their menial, but they shall not spurn me as a loathsome thing. The time has now arrived to do you and them am-

ple justice; and I, unworthy as I am, will be the instrument in the hands of Heaven to arrest their course of crime.

"I shall now proceed to detail what has occurred since the day you came with Richard Brown to the room of Tyrrel, whom you saw apparently in a dying state, and who, though seriously hurt by the attack of Smith and Jenkins, was not so much injured that he could not soon after quit the house. Finding that he was not, as he had supposed, about to die, he became alarmed for his safety, apprehending that the disclosures he had made to you might lead to his arrest. We lost no time, therefore, in procuring other lodgings, to which we immediately removed with all our effects. Emma Tyrrel, having, from her infancy, been accustomed to a different society from that with which her father associated, was placed where she would move in a respectable circle, and no longer be exposed to the contaminating presence of such reprobates as formed our little company. Even the father, wicked as he was, felt that he was too degraded, too corrupt, to breathe the same atmosphere with his lovely and innocent daughter; and, as there still existed in that moral wreck, a pure desire for the welfare and happiness of his offspring, he separated himself from Emma, after placing her where every attention would be given to her comfort and convenience.

"Jenkins and his companion, fearing that their assault upon Tyrrel might result in their falling into the hands of the police, thought it necessary to

withdraw for a short period from the city. It was the custom of these men, to have a small place in the country to which they might retreat occasionally, especially after committing deeds calculated to make the officers of justice unusually active and vigilant. This was an occasion which imperatively demanded their absence, for they left Tyrrel's house under the impression that they had taken his life. On the way to their hiding-place, the old tenement in West Chester county, they overtook a farmer, whom they cheated and robbed; an act which subsequently led to their expulsion by you and others. Richard Brown, on that occasion, had the address so far to lull Jenkins's usual caution, as to make an appointment with him which both parties observed, and from which grew all the troubles you have recently encountered."

"Good God!" exclaimed Vincent; "has Brown, then, descended so low as to make coadjutors of such men?"

"How little you know of that young man's character!" replied Judith, her features relaxing into something like a smile. "Listen attentively, and you shall know all.

"The difficulty between Tyrrel and his friends was soon accommodated by Jenkins, who, for himself and in behalf of Smith, apologized for their rude conduct. Tyrrel gladly accepted their apology, being almost destitute of funds, in consequence of having put you in possession of a large sum for Emma's benefit, and restored, through the same

channel, that won from young Anderson. Smith and Jenkins, on their part, thought it unsafe to be on bad terms with Tyrrel, who, they feared, might take an early opportunity of putting the police on their track, in revenge for the harsh treatment he had received at their hands. These enemies being once more friends, laid their heads together to form new schemes whereby to repair their broken fortunes. The restoration of Anderson's money had been a severe blow to them, and left them almost penniless. We all lived in the same house, which stood in the heart of the city, but on a street occupied chiefly by the lower order of people. Harmony now prevailed in their councils; for, since the fight, fear and distrust of one another compelled them to exercise more caution in their intercourse than they had been accustomed to observe. I was their housekeeper and superintendent of their effects, and for my services they allowed me a liberal compensation. Since Jenkins's return I had had but little to say to him, notwithstanding that he made strong efforts to ingratiate himself into my favour. I could not forget that he had meanly abandoned me when I was without the means of support, and I therefore steadily refused to meet his advances towards a reconciliation.

"About this time, Jenkins one evening brought Richard Brown to our house, and introduced him to Smith and Tyrrel as a valuable accession to their number. Tyrrel, as soon as he discovered who the young man was, endeavoured, through him, to get

back the money won from Anderson, having, since his recovery, repented of his request that it should be returned to its owner. Brown replied that the money had passed into Mr. Wilmot's hands and could not be recovered; but that he had a plan, which, if successful, would once more put them in funds, and, at the same time, be of important service to him. All manifested much impatience to hear the project, promising, if feasible, to lend him their aid.

"He then proceeded to state that he was connected with a wealthy firm, the head of which was his uncle; that he had a beautiful cousin, the daughter of that uncle, with whom he was deeply in love; and that a fellow-clerk of his, named Vincent, had suddenly become a favourite in the family, and made a decided impression upon the heart of his fair friend. It was his object, he said, to ruin this Vincent, who had crossed his path, and robbed him of every chance of obtaining Miss Wilmot's hand. He proposed, therefore, that a forgery should be committed in such way as to throw suspicion upon the young man, and thus place an effectual bar between him and the daughter of his employer.

"The trio immediately consented to undertake this business, and the whole evening was consumed in devising the proper mode of procedure. Tyrrel, indeed, said he should prefer to leave you unharmed; but, as Brown would not listen to any proposition that did not involve the ruin and disgrace of his intended victim, nothing more was urged by the

former in your favour. During the discussion I was in an adjoining room; but this did not prevent my hearing all that was said, though the conversation was carried on in an under tone, that it might not be overheard by any other occupant of the house. Me they never feared, and in my presence always spoke unreservedly of their deeds and plans. I was now particularly attentive to all that passed, especially after I learned who was to be sacrificed; and I determined that, if I did not thwart their measures, I would at least make them rue the consequences.

"Brown was frequently in company with these men, and was seen with them in the most public streets. On one occasion Tyrrel was permitted to call upon him at Mr. Wilmot's counting-room, so bold had Brown become in his assocaition with men of infamous character. Tyrrel then saw you, but at that time he did not know who you were."

CHAPTER XVI.

"The plan finally agreed upon was, that the forgery should be committed by Tyrrel, who was an expert penman, and who, after some practice, could copy any handwriting with perfect exactness. Such was his skill in this line, that, on one occasion, a gentleman whose name had been forged by him, could with difficulty be made to believe that the signature was not genuine. Brown was then to put into your desk a paper filled with the name of the firm, to induce the belief that you had been practising the signature, and thus to excite a suspicion which other circumstances were to strengthen and confirm. He also undertook to get possession of your pocket-book, and to put therein a portion of the identical money drawn from the bank, so concealing it within the folds that it should not easily be discovered by you. In order to supply you with a motive for the commission of this crime, Jenkins was to write such a letter as would make it appear that you were deeply in debt to an individual clamorous for his money, and in possession of some secret which placed you in his power. All this was immediately carried into effect; with what success, you are as well informed as I am."

"The moment I learned that you had quitted your employers, I told Tyrrel who you were, and

threatened to disclose the whole affair to the police. He was much astonished on learning that you were Mr. Aubrey's son; professed to lament his agency in disgracing you; and declared he would have satisfaction from Brown, even if, in doing so, he should be compelled to sacrifice himself.

"Soon after this successful commencement of the persecution, I endeavoured to possess myself of papers necessary to establish the guilt of Brown and his coadjutors, and, consequently, to place your innocence beyond question. One of these papers was a half sheet of foolscap, which Tyrrel had literally filled with the firm's name, before he was satisfied that the imitation was sufficiently close to defy detection. The corresponding half Brown had taken to deposite in your desk, agreeably to the arrangement. The other document was a note addressed by Brown to Tyrrel, which contained a postscript, stating that everything had been satisfactorily arranged, even to the placing of the money in the wallet. Both these papers I had seen and handled, but I could not take them without my motives being suspected. To possess them, however, was essential to my object, and I resolved to procure them, cost what it might. Not knowing precisely where they were deposited, it was necessary to gain access to several trunks, which I accomplished by means of keys obtained for the purpose. In one of these I found the half sheet of paper, and Brown's note I took at night from Jenkins's pocket while he was asleep.

"The same evening on which Tyrrel learned

the name of his victim, Brown met the junto at our house, where a supper was given by Jenkins, now well supplied with money. Tyrrel received him very coolly, and, on becoming heated with wine, deliberately insulted him; upbraiding him with the baseness of his conduct towards an innocent man, and expressing his determination to see that the consequences of the crime they had committed, should rest upon the head of its projector. His language was such as exasperated Brown, who, having lost command of his feelings, seized a plate and threw it with great violence at Tyrrel's head. The latter retaliated by throwing a decanter, which, fortunately for Brown, passed him without doing any injury. The parties now clinched, and a battle would have ensued had not their companions interfered and separated them. When they had become quiet, Jenkins and Smith, aware that this misunderstanding would endanger their own safety, endeavoured to effect a reconciliation. But Tyrrel stubbornly refused to be pacified, and declared he would never again be friendly to Brown. This was the first time I had known that scoundrel to sacrifice policy to feeling.

"Brown, not satisfied with having deprived you of your situation, desired not only to injure you in the estimation of Mr. Wilmot, but publicly to disgrace you. This was particularly the case after your altercation with him in your room, which confirmed his resolution not to relax his efforts, till he should have completed your ruin. The next evening he came to our house, and made known

his intention of disclosing the forgery to the police. He was almost beside himself with rage, excited by your attempt to expel him from your chamber; and he swore that if he did not, on the following morning, take your life, he would not sleep till he had revenged himself in the way now proposed. His plan was, if you both survived the duel, to accuse you of the crime, state the evidence against you, and refer to the officers of the bank for additional information. He then drew up a letter addressed to one of the justices, which Jenkins, after some hesitation, copied; but it was subsequently thought advisable that Smith should go to the police-office, which he did with unparalleled audacity. I succeeded, a few days since, in obtaining from Jenkins's trunk (into which it had been carelessly thrown among other papers) the original draft in Brown's own handwriting.

"Jenkins and Smith (and, of course, Tyrrel) were averse to taking this step, seeing that, without benefiting them, it might in some way endanger their safety; and feeling no ill-will towards you, they refused to have anything more to do with the matter, unless it could be made an object to them in a pecuniary point of view. These scruples Brown removed by paying them in advance a considerable sum of money, and promising them as much more in a short time; while they, on their part, covenanted to do all that he should require of them, provided the service involved no extraordinary risk. Brown, without their aid, might easily have put the police in possession of all necessary

information; but, for some reason, he preferred that they should be the actors, supposing, perhaps, that, in the event of detection, they alone would be the sufferers. In the subsequent transactions Tyrrel refused to participate, though he durst not oppose his friends.

"Their plan succeeded to their wish. The moment I ascertained that you had been arrested, I called upon the justice, and, after receiving his promise that I should not be harmed, I proceeded to state what I knew in reference to the forgery, and exhibited to him the proofs of Brown's and his colleagues' guilt. They were perfectly satisfactory to him, and he assured me that you should immediately be discharged. The papers are now in his possession. After hearing my story, he inquired what time the men would be at home, and promised to send to the house I named, a posse of officers to arrest them. He did so; but, when the constables came, the birds had flown. Whether they suspected my fidelity, or merely wished to rid themselves of an expensive encumbrance, I cannot say; but certain it is, that, when I returned home, every vestige of them—bag and baggage—had disappeared. It was now important to move cautiously, lest they should become alarmed and leave the city. About this time Brown, too, left Mr. Wilmot's, and could not be found, although the strictest search was daily made for him, as well as for his wily coadjutors.

"Since that time I have been unwearied in my exertions to discover them, by frequenting their old

haunts, and inquiring of people to whom they were known; but I neither saw nor heard of them till the day before yesterday, when, as I was passing through Chatham Square, I perceived a crowd gathered around a person whom I discovered to be Brown. He had been attacked by a man named O'Dogherty, with whom he had had some misunderstanding, and who now undertook to castigate him publicly for having, on a previous occasion, got the advantage in a personal encounter. When the crowd had dispersed, I asked O'Dogherty whether he knew where Brown lived. His reply was, that he did not, but that he knew who his associates were, and where he was in the practice of visiting. On my telling him that I could perhaps assist him in the gratification of his enmity to Brown, if he would inform me where I could see the men whom he described as that person's companions, he readily offered to do so, and to accompany me immediately to the spot.

"We walked nearly a mile, which brought us to the outskirts of the city, and not far from the North River. The house pointed out to me as that occupied by the men I sought, is a small two-story wooden building, standing back from the street, with a yard in front. The lower part is kept as a bar-room of a low description. My guide lives near to this house, in the upper story of which I saw Tyrrel sitting at the window. Leaving O'Dogherty after promising to see him again, I walked up stairs without ceremony, and, judging

from Tyrrel's countenance, surprised him by my sudden and certainly unexpected appearance. I affected much concern at being so cruelly abandoned by him; stated, as my reason for calling upon him, that I was poor, and wanted a small sum of money; and promised, on being supplied, to trouble him no more. I succeeded in quieting his fears (if he had any) of my object, and he does not, I am satisfied, apprehend any danger from me.

"Tyrrel was communicative on the subject of Brown and his affairs, and gave me a little history of what had occurred since your arrest. It appears that Brown traced you to the office of Mr. Eldredge, and at his suggestion Jenkins wrote to that gentleman the letter which caused you to be dismissed. He subsequently saw you in the street, dogged you to the counting-house of the merchant in whose employ you were for a short time, and then, with a like success, communicated to him the same information. During this period, Tyrrel, finding that Brown was well supplied with money, laid a plan to relieve him of a considerable portion. He pretended to have forgotten the recent quarrel, and to be desirous of re-establishing a friendly relation with him. It was the practice of these men to play for small sums with one another, every evening that they were not more profitably engaged; and from occasionally taking a part in the games, Brown gradually became exceedingly fond of gambling, and often staked money, which, to encourage him, he was sometimes allowed to win, the loss or gain on either side, by this means, being inconsiderable. When a thirst

for gaming was thoroughly established, Tyrrel and his associates embraced a favourable moment to strip him of every dollar, and to bring him in debt to a very large amount.

"A day or two after writing the last letter, Brown disappeared, and was not seen by any of the junto for a fortnight. They supposed he had abandoned them in consequence of being unable to pay his debt; but at length he returned, pale and emaciated, and said that he had been on a visit to Baltimore. He seldom ventures into the street except at night, and lodges in a remote part of the city, with a private family of low condition. He seems, according to Tyrrel, to be in continual fear of an arrest, and trembles at the sight of every stranger that enters the house. He is almost destitute of money, and is now living on the remains of a loan made at a pawnbroker's by pledging a valuable diamond ring. His companions in iniquity have made repeated efforts to ascertain what has occurred that might have caused this change; but he has given them none but evasive replies, and they are, consequently, unable to explain this mysterious conduct.

"From Tyrrel's inquiry whether I had lately heard from or seen you, I infer a suspicion on his part that Brown might have put his recent threat in execution. Smith, having occasion to visit West Chester about the beginning of Brown's absence, is positive that he saw him on the road, partially disguised in a hat and coat very different from those he usually wore. It was early twilight at the time, and the features of a horseman riding at a quick

pace could not be distinctly seen and recognised; but he is nevertheless quite certain that the person he saw was Brown returning to the city.

"I have now, Mr. Aubrey, brought my story to a close. My duty will have been fully performed when, through my instrumentality, Brown and his wicked tools are delivered into the hands of justice; and when I shall have restored the long-lost son to his father, and thus made some amends for the misery which I have inflicted upon both."

"What proof have you, Mrs. Vincent," said Charles, "of my identity with the child that was stolen as you have described?"

"This necklace," replied Judith, taking a string of carnelion beads from her bag, "which you wore at the time, and which, on the clasp, bears the name Charles Aubrey. I have also a large shawl in which you were wrapped, and which I have carefully preserved as the means of establishing your identity, whenever it should become necessary. Added to these, I have a newspaper containing the advertisement inserted at the time by your unhappy father, in which these articles are described, together with certain indelible marks on your person. One is, I remember, a bald place less than the size of a shilling on the right side of your head, caused by a fall from your nurse's arms on something pointed. There is the spot."

"True; this necklace bears the name Charles Aubrey, and I have the mark you speak of; yet I scarcely dare entertain the hope that for me, who have been the child of misfortune, so much felicity

can possibly be in the bosom of futurity. Have you other proof of what you assert?"

"I have, and at the proper time I will produce it. Have you heard from Mr. Aubrey?"

"No; Tyrrel's request that Mr. Aubrey should be written to, and informed of the probable existence of his child, was complied with, but no answer was ever received. Mr. Wilmot, however, recently saw a gentleman residing in the same neighbourhood, who stated that Mr. Aubrey had been long absent on an extensive tour through the Southern and Western states; but that he was daily expected home, a letter having, a few days since, been received from him, dated at the Falls of Niagara."

"We ought to see him immediately after his return; but I must bespeak your favourable interposition in my behalf, else he may cause me to be punished for my participation in the crime of detaining you after your abduction."

"Make yourself easy on that point," said Vincent; "for whatever influence I may possess, shall be exerted in your favour. Before an attempt is made to arrest these men, I wish to consult Mr. Wilmot, who is now in town; and as to-night will, perhaps, be the most suitable time to make a descent upon them, you will oblige me by coming hither again about nightfall. Meanwhile, we will arrange matters with the police, and have officers ready to go with you to secure them."

After ascertaining from Judith where Brown lived, Charles dismissed her. He was now almost fran-

tic with joy, and it was some time before he could calmly reflect upon his new position, and decide what course to pursue. At one moment he regretted having allowed Judith to go away, fearing she might never return; at the next, he determined to go immediately to the police-office, and cause the arrest to be made forthwith, before the rogues should have time to effect their escape. Again he hesitated, but at length concluded that he had better consult Mr. Wilmot, and be governed by his advice. He thereupon took his hat, and, without staying to answer the inquiry of M'Gregor concerning the *mulier horribilis*, as he styled her, set off for the counting-room of Wilmot & Co. He found the head of the firm in his private office, and gave him the substance of Judith's story. Mr. Wilmot, while he sincerely rejoiced at the brightening prospects of his young friend, was pained beyond measure by the wickedness of his nephew. He was now exceedingly embarrassed, and unable to decide what ought to be done. He was desirous of bringing Jenkins and his friends to justice; but if he should do that, the conduct of Brown would of course be exposed in all its horrid deformity. "What do you advise, Charles?" he asked.

"I should recommend," answered Charles, "that you go to your nephew, apprize him of his danger, and send him immediately from the city. It will be necessary, however, that you should furnish him with money; for, if Judith spoke the truth, he has lately lost a large sum in gambling, and is now

living on what remains of a loan that he made at a pawnbroker's."

"Is it possible! The scoundrel shall be sent upon a three years' voyage to the Pacific. I take your advice, Charles, and I shall go to him instantly, and insist upon his leaving New-York by one of the afternoon boats. In the mean time we shall see what ought to be done in regard to the others. Come to me again three hours hence. If you have nothing particular to do now, perhaps you had better call again upon this young Anderson, and request him to meet me here at nine o'clock to-morrow; or, if you should find him disengaged, bring him with you."

Charles repaired to the advocate's and there found his friend. He told Anderson that he had important news for him, and suggested that they should withdraw to some place where they might be alone. A small room adjoining the office being vacant, they took possession of it, and remained there during the interview.

"Before I give you the information which it will afford me as much pleasure to communicate as it will delight you to receive, allow me to inquire about one in whom I feel a deep interest. I allude to Miss M'Cready."

"Her health," replied Anderson, "is nearly restored, and, by degrees, she is becoming reconciled to her severe disappointment. Already she manifests a considerable degree of cheerfulness; and I trust that time, the heart's best physician, will eradicate from her bosom every vestige of attach-

ment to the villain who wellnigh brought her to the grave.

"When I returned from the country, I called, as usual, upon Miss M'Cready, and finding her in so much better spirits than I had reason to expect, I once more solicited a favourable answer to my suit. Again I told her that I would, for the present, be satisfied with her esteem, and would trust for a change of that esteem into love, to the influence of time and my own assiduity. She gave me no decisive answer, but promised to take the subject into serious consideration, and to let me know her determination within a week. I continued to visit her every evening, and had the happiness to perceive that she received me with increasing cordiality and pleasure, and that she gradually became less despondent, and, consequently, more like to what she was when I first knew her. At the expiration of the week she consented to be mine. Upon my expressing a strong desire to know the name of him who had obtained her affections with the most dishonourable intent, she reluctantly told me that he is a young man with whom she had accidentally met, at a time when her father was in imminent danger, and who, with one other that accompanied him, was the means of saving her parent's life. His name is Richard Brown, and he is the same who was your antagonist at Hoboken, and who was the enemy of my poor brother, and indirectly his base destroyer."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Charles; "what a black-hearted villain has Brown shown himself to

be! He is my persecutor as well as hers. This young lady, then, must be the daughter of—"

"John Tyrrel," interrupted Anderson; "a man whom I have not yet seen, and who rarely, if ever, visits his lovely daughter. There is something mysterious in this fact which I cannot fathom. Emma told me it was her father's request that she should be known as Miss M'Cready; but why he desired the name Tyrrel to be suppressed, she was unable to explain. She accounted for the little intercourse between her and her father, by saying that he was so constantly engaged, and was obliged to be absent from New-York so much of the time, that he could not possibly visit her so frequently as both desired. I fear that Tyrrel's character is not what it should be; but I would not willingly believe that Emma has concealed anything from me that she is bound in honour to communicate. Pray what do you know of Tyrrel?"

"I know him too well," replied Vincent; "he is the same individual who won your money."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Anderson. "That villain, sir, pretended to be my friend; and, when he had made me his dupe, he stripped me, by fraudulent play, of every farthing I possessed."

"And subsequently restored it."

"Never a penny. I have not seen him since that unfortunate night. He left me a beggar, and it is my poverty, the consequence of his villany, that forms the only insurmountable obstacle to my union with Emma."

"The whole of your fortune is now in the hands

of Mr. Wilmot, my late employer, who has also a large sum which he is authorized to pay to Emma M'Cready Tyrrel, or to any one legally entitled to receive it in her behalf."

"What say you?" demanded Anderson, eagerly; "my fortune restored? Pray explain."

Vincent then went into a detailed account of all the circumstances connected with his first introduction to Tyrrel, concluding with a history of the night adventure on the Hudson, when he and Brown supposed that Anderson had perished.

"And is it to you, my friend, that I am indebted for my life? Good God! if you knew what I had suffered previously to my attempt at suicide, you could hardly censure me for that rash and wicked act. But how much have I to thank you for! You saved me from dying like a fool; from the commission of a great crime; from suffering the penalty due to the destroyer of his own life; and now you make me happy by bringing news as joyful as they are unexpected. Then Emma," continued he, after a short pause, "does not know the character of her father?"

"She does not, I am satisfied," replied Charles; "for Tyrrel assured me that she has been well educated, has always enjoyed the benefit of an intercourse with respectable society, and that she was not aware of the means by which her father supported himself and her."

"I am rejoiced to hear it!" exclaimed Anderson; "but how can I, with propriety, marry the daughter of a man whose crimes may one day

send him to a prison or a gibbet, and thus disgrace his child and all connected with her? Yet, after what Emma has suffered, how can I tell her that her father is a common felon, and that she, amiable and innocent as she is, is unworthy of my love?"

"He is likely to be brought to justice much sooner than he expects, for already the police is in possession of facts which will this evening cause him to be arrested."

"Then Emma is doomed!" said Anderson; "such a blow would strike her to the earth. Cannot this stroke be averted?"

"I fear not," said Charles; "but we will converse with Mr. Wilmot on the subject, if you can accompany me to his counting-room, where I am to meet him about two hours hence."

"I will," replied Anderson. "Do you know where Tyrrel resides?"

"I do," answered Charles; "Judith gave me the street and number."

"I would to God I could see him, in order to apprize him of his danger. He is a guilty man, it is true, and deserves severe punishment; but, for his daughter's sake, I should be glad if he could escape. I communicated with him in writing, to obtain his sanction to the engagement between Emma and me; and in the same letter (which she forwarded) I gave him an account of Brown's dishonourable conduct, and of its nearly fatal consequences. I have not yet received a reply, but hope to get one to-day. I shall inquire at the postoffice as we pass."

"You have not told me," said Vincent, "in what manner you escaped drowning the night I first saw you."

"I continued," said Anderson, "to support myself as long as I was able, when, just as I had begun to despair, I descried something approaching me which at first I mistook for a sloop, so large did it seem, but which proved to be a boat bottom up, with two men clinging to the sides. I was fortunate enough to seize hold before it passed, and was thus carried along until we struck the shore, which happened in a very few minutes. On landing, I was so much exhausted that I could not stand; but I was hospitably received into the house of a person living near to the river, and by him brought to the city on the following day. One of the two men was drowned.'

At the appointed hour, Vincent and his friend repaired to Mr. Wilmot's office, having stopped at the postoffice, whence Anderson obtained a letter from Tyrrel, of which the following is a copy:

"Sir—Your letter of yesterday was received. Allow me to thank you for your attention to my daughter. If, after learning the character of her father, you shall wish to marry her, you have my assent to the union. Mr. Wilmot has a sum of money belonging to Emma. I should die happy could I be certain that she will have you as her husband and protector. If you marry my daughter, be kind to her; she is amiable, and will love you as you ought to be loved. God bless you both. Forgive the injury I once did you. John Tyrrel."

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. Wilmot was exceedingly alarmed at the tidings brought by Vincent. He had lately felt serious apprehensions that Brown was not guiltless of the forgery, and of the subsequent persecution; and his suspicions were now confirmed in a way which scarcely permitted him to hope that his nephew might prove to be innocent. Much as he desired to have those concerned in the forgery punished, he determined that he would, if possible, save Brown from arrest; though he saw no way to guard his character, in the event of his accomplices' being brought to trial.

Reflecting upon the awkward and unfortunate predicament of his nephew, Mr. Wilmot set off in search of him. He knew the name of the street in which Brown resided, and the number of the house; and he also knew where Jenkins and his companions lived, but had little expectation of finding any of them at home. He went direct to Brown's lodgings, a small building in a remote part of the city, surrounded by houses of the meanest description. Before the door stood a physician's gig, and around the knocker was tied a piece of flannel, which indicated that an inmate lay seriously indisposed. In answer to his summons, there came an elderly woman of not very respectable appearance, of whom

he inquired whether a young man named Richard Brown resided there.

"No, sir," was the reply; "there is no person of that name living here."

"I was told, madam, that my nephew is lodging at No. — in this street."

"You are right as to the number; but, if your nephew is named Brown, you will have to seek farther. We have a young man here who calls himself Wilson, and he, poor fellow, is at the point of death."

"Perhaps, madam, this Mr. Wilson is the individual I wish to see."

"Pray, sir," said the woman, "how can that be? If the man you want to see is named Brown, surely Mr. Wilson is not the gentleman. I haven't time to stop here, for the young man must be attended to."

"Stay one moment, my good woman; what sort of person is this Mr. Wilson you speak of? My reason for asking," continued Mr. Wilmot, in an under tone, and at the same time putting a bank-note into her hand, "is, that I strongly suspect my nephew, who is rather a wild boy, has assumed the name of Wilson."

"Thank you for this, sir," said the woman, attempting a smile. "Why, he is, I should say, twenty years old or thereabouts; has black hair and eyes, and always dressed genteel."

"Does he wear a dark blue cloth cap?"

"He did, sir; but I am thinking he'll never want that or any other again."

"I am satisfied. Now, my good lady, lead me to his room."

"I'll do your bidding, but you must make no noise, for the doctor says the house must be kept still."

Mr. Wilmot followed the woman up stairs, and entered the principal apartment, which had been purposely made so dark by the closing of the shutters, that, for a moment, he did not recognise his nephew, who lay upon the bed. Brown was so changed that his uncle would hardly have known him at the first glance, even in broad daylight. His countenance was pale and ghastly, his cheeks were much sunken, and his eyes were half closed and lustreless. His head being bolstered by two or three pillows, enabled him to see Mr. Wilmot the moment that gentleman entered the chamber. Brown immediately held out a hand which he scarcely had strength to raise, and when Mr. Wilmot received it, he saw that the dying person before him was indeed his unhappy nephew.

The surgeon in attendance, a gentleman known to Mr. Wilmot, whispered him, that, having a call to make in the neighbourhood, he would absent himself for half an hour and then return. He remarked, besides, that everything had been done which the circumstances of the case required; but that the patient, who, on the preceding night, had received a mortal wound from a dirk, could not possibly survive many hours.

On turning again to Brown, Mr. Wilmot perceived that tears were streaming from his eyes, and that he

was endeavouring to speak. After several ineffectual attempts to make himself understood, Richard at length asked whether Vincent were still alive.

"He is," replied Mr. Wilmot, "and perfectly well."

"Thank God! thank God! I feared that I had killed him!" exclaimed Brown, throwing himself forward and rolling upon his side in a position that rendered him utterly helpless. The wound in his breast, which had been only partially stanched, now poured forth a fresh stream of blood; and, before assistance could be procured, he fainted, and lay some minutes apparently dead. When he recovered a little, he remained a short time silent, and appeared to be in deep thought. At length, in a scarcely audible whisper, he observed,

"I have not long to live, but I must do justice to Charles before I die. He did not commit the forgery. The whole of that wicked business was a plot of mine, executed by another. I was prompted by jealousy arising from my apprehension that Clara preferred him to me. It was I that pursued him from place to place, and instigated my companions to write those letters which deprived him of employment; and it was I that attempted to destroy his life on the occasion of his last visit to Beechwood. I did not, however, meditate that deed when I went secretly to the vicinity of your mansion; my object was only to obtain an interview with my cousin, whom I have long loved. Finding her and Charles conversing in a secluded spot, my worst fears were confirmed; and, under a sudden impulse of jealousy,

I drew a pistol and shot him. I saw that the shot took effect, and from that day till now I have regarded myself as a murderer. I rejoice that my purpose failed. Ask him to forgive me; and, now that I am about to leave this world, I implore your forgiveness, my dear—"

Here his voice sunk into an indistinct muttering, but in a few moments he revived a little, and added, "I am not able, uncle Wilmot, to tell you of what I have been guilty. My present situation is but a just punishment inflicted by a father for my conduct towards his daughter. Oh, that I could feel assured that Emma forgives me! Tell her—tell Emma Tyrrel, that the consciousness of having injured her, imbittered the last moments of my life. A letter in my desk addressed to her will show where she may be found. To you, my dear uncle, I am under a load of obligation for an uninterrupted kindness which I have never till now appreciated. I have been very ungrateful for so much goodness; and, if I have a desire to live, it is because I wish to make some amends for the base ingratitude of which I have been guilty. During a career of crime, which had its beginning years ago, I have wronged you time after time, and allowed others to suffer the consequences. Oh, what a wretch have I been! Once more I ask your forgiveness. Tell Vincent that he—"

Brown's utterance was here checked by a sudden faintness, which only partially yielded to powerful restoratives. He never spoke again; but,

after suffering intense agony for nearly two hours, expired in Mr. Wilmot's arms.

On returning to the counting-room, Mr. Wilmot found Vincent and Anderson waiting for him. A letter had also been received from Mr. Aubrey, acknowledging the receipt of the agreeable intelligence which had reached him at St. Louis. He had made his way home with all possible speed, and added that he expected to be in New-York on the day following but one, when he hoped to hear something more concerning a son whom he had long since given up as irrecoverably lost.

Mr. Wilmot was so much overcome by the untimely fate of his nephew, that he felt no disposition to converse. He observed, however, that it was not within his power to prevent the arrest of Tyrrel and his accomplices, inasmuch as the police had already made arrangements to take them into custody. He congratulated Anderson upon his extraordinary luck in recovering his fortune, and promised to pay over the money in the course of a few days. He regretted that he had not sooner found him, and expressed his surprise that the advertisement, inserted in two of the daily papers, had not been seen. It happened, however, that those particular newspapers Anderson rarely saw; indeed, he seldom read any but an evening journal taken at the office of Mr. Eldredge.

Agreeably to appointment, Judith, about dark the same night, came to Vincent's lodgings; and, when the constables arrived, carriages were pro-

cured, and they proceeded to the house of Tyrrel and his friends, accompanied by Charles and Anderson. They stopped and alighted from the coaches two squares distant from their place of destination, that they might pounce upon the rogues without giving any notice of their approach. Judith now took the lead, exulting in the prospect of bringing the men she hated to merited punishment. She went up stairs, followed by the officers, Vincent and Anderson waiting at the door below. Nobody was to be found. There was no light, and the upper part of the house, so far as they could discover after procuring a lamp, was unoccupied. Every article of furniture, excepting a broken chair or two, had been taken away, and it was quite evident that its late occupants had deserted their quarters. On inquiring of the tipsy barkeeper below stairs, they learned that his lodgers had removed early in the morning of that day, but he could not say whither they had gone; or, if he knew, was unwilling to give any information concerning them.

Disappointed of their prey, the party returned. Judith was the only person much chagrined at the unsuccessful result of the campaign, for she had set her heart on being revenged for the injuries which she had sustained. As we have seen, she could not brook the thought of being cast penniless upon the world by the man who was honourably bound to care for her as long as she lived; and his desertion of her had so much augmented her previous dislike, that she would have willingly sacrificed

her life, could she, by doing so, have cast him and his accomplices into prison, or brought them to the halter.

Vincent, after he had taken down the number of the street in which Judith lived, communicated to her the news that had been received from Mr. Aubrey; and having supplied her with money, and requested her to call upon him every day till the arrival of his father, he sent her home in a coach.

Three days subsequently to Brown's death, Mr. Wilmot and Mr. Aubrey (who had just arrived in town) were seated in the drawing-room of the former in his house in —— street. The latter had not yet seen Charles; and so impatient was he, that he could with difficulty await the hour (which was just at hand) appointed for the meeting. Judith was to be present.

"The evidence," said Mr. Aubrey, "is not quite complete; since, although the woman may have the necklace worn by the infant, and the shawl in which he was wrapped, yet these are not proofs that Mr. Vincent is my son. The mark on his head is to me more satisfactory than anything else; but if he really be my son, we shall find on his body, near the left breast, a scarlet spot, which was remarkable for its resemblance to a profile of the human face. I described it in the advertisement. But it appears to me, that, unless he has very much altered, I shall recognise him. His countenance is distinctly and indelibly impressed upon my memory, and by his lofty head and peculiar features, I think I should have little difficulty in

pronouncing, without further examination, whether or not I am entitled to claim him as a son. When, allow me to ask, and under what circumstances, did you first see him?"

"On a very cold day," replied Mr. Wilmot, "about nine years ago, there came into my office a dirty boy ten or eleven years of age, who, with much naïveté, asked permission to warm himself by the fire. I consented, and bade him take a seat. While he sat there I asked him where he lived. He replied that he had no home; that his mother had been naughty, and was in prison in Philadelphia; and that he had been placed among strangers in a poor-house, whence, in consequence of his having been ill-treated, he had run away and come to New-York. This was the substance of his story. He was a pretty boy, and his forlorn condition strongly excited my sympathy. I took him home with me, had him washed and combed, and purchased for him some clothes, of which he had none but those he wore. He could not read very well, yet he was excessively fond of books; and his disposition was so soft and amiable, that, before he had been many hours in my house, he had made a friend of every inmate.

"It was not my intention to support and educate him: such an idea had not entered my head, till the boy himself, being told by a servant that he was soon to be sent to Philadelphia, came to me crying, and begged that I would set him to work, and allow him to live with me. It then occurred to me that

it would, perhaps, be doing society, as well as the boy, a real service to educate and make him a useful and respectable man. My wife approved the plan, and having obtained from the commissioners of the institution from which he had escaped, their permission to retain him, I placed him to board in the family of an acquaintance, and sent him to school. He studied diligently and improved most rapidly. At the proper time I received him into my counting-house, and I have had every reason to be satisfied with his services and conduct. On leaving school he employed a private teacher to instruct him in the languages, under whose tuition, by close application and unwearied industry, he made himself a good scholar."

Mr. Wilmot then proceeded to glance at Vincent's subsequent history; but he had made but little progress, when Charles and Judith entered the apartment. This meeting of father and son took place in silence. Mr. Aubrey received Charles's hand, looked intently upon his features without speaking, and at length turned aside as if to conceal the tears that gathered in his eyes. Charles's emotions were now too powerful to be controlled. He had come hither with the expectation of beholding his father, and of being received by him as a son; but, at the same time, he entertained strong fears that some unforeseen difficulties would arise to destroy these delightful hopes. On seeing this movement of Mr. Aubrey, he mistook it for the evidence of disappointment; and his apprehension that he would not

be owned being now confirmed, he burst into tears. These bitter feelings, however, were soon changed into those of joy, on hearing Mr. Aubrey address him as his son.

Judith now exhibited all her proof of Vincent's identity with the stolen child, and at the same time spoke of the scarlet spot alluded to by Mr. Aubrey. This was then examined, and coincided with the description of it in the advertisement, a copy of which Judith produced.

Before they separated, Mr. Aubrey agreed to allow Judith a certain sum annually for her support as long as she should live, and also offered her the occupancy of a small house on his estate, which she declined, preferring to reside in New-York.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Aubrey then proceeded, in compliance with Charles's request, to give a circumstantial account of the robbery, as it had been described to him by the gentlemen who were in the house at the time, and of the subsequent transactions which grew out of that unhappy affair.

"When this occurred," said Mr. Aubrey, "I was absent from home. I had gone to New-York, and left my house and family under the care of my own and my wife's brother, who at that time were residing with me. On the night of the robbery, my brother was awakened by a noise in the room directly under that in which he slept, and having listened a few moments at the head of the stairs, and satisfied himself that the house had been entered by burglars, he awoke the other gentleman, and communicated the fact to him, desiring his assistance in an attempt to secure the robbers. Without ascertaining their number or means of resistance, they prepared to make a vigorous attack; and having struck a light and loaded a brace of pistols, they cautiously descended the stairs. My wife, who happened to be awake, opened the door and inquired of the gentlemen as they passed what the matter was below; but they evaded a direct reply, lest she might be unnecessarily alarmed, and went down without satisfying her curiosity. She

had good reason, however, for suspecting that there were thieves in the house; for, besides that strange noises in the lower story had reached her ears, she perceived that the gentlemen were armed—a circumstance that sufficiently explained their errand.

"Before they reached the bottom of the stairs, they heard a shrill whistle on the outside of the house; and supposing that their light had been seen by some man stationed there to watch, they thought it advisable to hasten to the lawn, in order to catch or shoot down any person making his exit from the building. My brother, as he passed one of the rooms—that in which he supposed the robbers to be—shut the door, and locked it, thus preventing their getting out, except at one of the four windows of the apartment. They then emerged from the house, and, when they reached the piazza, discovered a man standing in the moonlight about thirty yards distant, who, the instant he perceived them, dashed into a neighbouring grove, and concealed himself from their view. Thence they went round the angle of the house, where they waited a short time with the expectation of seeing one of the windows thrown open. Nor were they disappointed; for presently one of the shutters was unfastened, and a man sprang out, who was instantly caught by those standing ready to receive him.

"To catch the desperado, however, and to hold him, they soon found to be very different things; for a blow from the fellow sent my brother to measure his length upon the ground, and the other gen-

tleman, being no match for one of such Herculean power, was easily disposed of by the robber. No sooner had one effected his escape, than another followed him with great rapidity; but, at the distance of fifty yards, he was brought down by a pistol-shot, which could have wounded him but slightly, as he rose immediately and made good his retreat.

"Having ascertained that no other remained in the room, they set off in pursuit of the fugitives.

"While these events were taking place, my wife had thrown on her clothes, and, after wrapping her infant in a shawl, she went down to the foot of the stairs to observe what was going on. Most other women in her situation would have locked the door, and left the robbers to be taken care of by her protectors; but Mrs. Aubrey was a woman of singular courage and great nerve; and, had there been no male friends in the house, I am confident she would have ventured alone into the presence of the villains.

"When she reached the hall, she heard the report of the pistol, and paused a while to listen; but she had not stood there long, when a man suddenly rushed in, took the infant from her arms, and disappeared before she had recovered from the surprise occasioned by that audacious act. She followed him, uttering the most piercing screams, and came on the piazza just in time to observe a figure in the dim moonlight hastening across the lawn. Starting in pursuit, she made the air resound with her heart-rending cries. My brother heard her, and

returned a few paces to see what had happened; but when he perceived her, with no person near, coming at full speed towards him, he resumed the chase, and pursued the fugitives to their boat, which lay in a cove not far distant. When he and his companion reached the shore, the scoundrels had already pushed into the stream. Another pistol was discharged by one of the gentlemen, who, at the moment, did not know that the infant was on board.

"My wife stood on the bank of the river the very image of despair, shrieking and calling upon the robbers to bring back her babe. At length her strength failed and she swooned. In this situation she was carried into the house, and, when she recovered sufficiently to be aware of what had occurred, she renewed her cries, and again swooned. This excessive mental agitation induced a fever which, in less than a fortnight, terminated her existence.

"Meanwhile I had been sent for, and with all possible despatch I returned home from this city. I left no means untried to recover the child. I sent to the neighbouring towns and villages, and to Philadelphia, giving notice of the robbery, and employing officers of the police to make a thorough search for some clew that might lead to the detection of the burglars. I had my agents about the country to examine every suspicious house and hovel likely to harbour men of that character. Every spring was set in motion, and nothing was left undone that promised to render our labours successful.

"The alarming illness of my wife claimed my close attendance upon her, and prevented my taking an active part in the proceedings; and, while she lived, I was compelled to limit my exertions to the direction of others in their persevering efforts. After her death, however, I devoted all my time to the search, and travelled over a considerable portion of both Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, accompanied by an officer of the Philadelphia police.

"A few weeks subsequently to the death of my wife, a letter was put into my hands, postmarked Philadelphia, which purported to have been written by the person who had stolen my child. It was without a signature, and stated, in substance, that the writer had the infant; that he had conveyed it to a remote part of the country, where it would be well taken care of, and secure from any search that might be made; and that he was prepared to restore it on the receipt of such a ransom as I could afford to pay. He offered, for the sum of five thousand dollars, to return the babe within, I think, a week or fortnight; and, in the event of my acceding to his terms, suggested that the money should be enclosed in a letter, superscribed with some name (which I now forget), so that he might obtain it on a particular day.

"I exhibited this letter to my friends and asked their advice. They were unanimous in the opinion that the money should not be paid, and the following were their reasons: First, they said that no proof existed of the letter's having been written by the person who had the child; but that, as the mat-

ter had become well known throughout the country and in the city, some scoundrel might have taken that method of replenishing his pockets. Secondly, that, admitting it to have come from the robber himself, I might reasonably expect him, after the money was paid, to retain the child in the hope of extorting from me additional sums.

"I was so anxious to recover the boy, that it was long before I could be persuaded to follow this advice. I was willing to hazard five thousand dollars for even the chance of his being returned, and I felt confident that the burglar would honourably perform his promise. My friends, however, were so earnest in their remonstrance against this course, that I finally consented to adopt the mode of procedure which they recommended.

"My brother and I went to Philadelphia, and submitted the letter to the police. Their advice was, that a paper superscribed according to the directions, should be deposited in the postoffice, in order that the person who called for it, might be arrested by an officer appointed to attend there on the day it would be expected by the unknown. Strong hopes were entertained that this plan would result in the robber's being taken into custody, and in the recovery of my son without the payment of a farthing by way of ransom. Although others were sanguine of success, I was convinced that nothing would be gained by the stratagem; for I could not believe that the man would jeopard his safety, by making a personal application for the reply to his letter, or

by sending a messenger on the same day he had appointed. My friends imputed to him, I thought, a greater want of caution and foresight than circumstances warranted.

"As I had anticipated, the crafty fellow refused to oblige us by walking into the trap. A boy called for the letter, and, much to his astonishment, was seized by the officer, and taken into the postoffice for examination. It turned out that he knew nothing of the individual who had employed him to do this errand, not even his name. The boy was the son of a respectable mechanic, and had been requested to perform this service by a person who lived, as he supposed, at a tavern of low character, situated in a by-street, and who had promised him a dollar for the favour. We were satisfied of his innocence, and accompanied him to the tavern where he was to have met the man; but the wary villain, who had seen our proceedings, took care to keep beyond our reach.

"On the following day I received another letter from him, stating that his proposition had been made in good faith; that he had watched the boy till he saw him arrested; and that, for my sake as well as the child's, he was sorry that his liberal offer had only elicited a forcible attempt, on my part, to secure his person. He advised me to bear in mind that he was no tyro in the game he was playing, and that all our efforts to entrap him would prove fruitless. He added, that if I had deposited a letter without molesting his messenger, I should have received my boy within the time requisite to bring

him to me, or to any place that I might have designated. He then renewed the offer, and, at the same time, declared that, if I refused to accept his terms, or made any preparation to catch him or his agent, I should never hear from him again, and might abandon all hope of ever seeing my son alive.

"In the event of my assenting to his proposal, he directed me to pass a certain village about four miles, till I came to a lane which he described, and then to follow that avenue to its termination, which was a field bounded on the farther side by a small piece of woods covering an area of about four acres. In the centre of these woods, he observed, I would find a hollow, at the bottom of which was a rock, with a cavity on one side large enough to shelter two men. There he proposed that I should deposite the money, so that he might obtain it on one of the four remaining days of that week; and promised, on the receipt of it, to place the infant in the same spot within a fortnight, and to forward me notice of it in time to allow of my going thither the same day.

"Without consulting my friends, I determined to close with this offer. I enclosed in a letter five one thousand dollar bills of the bank of the United States, and immediately set off on horseback for that part of the country. Leaving my horse at a neighbouring inn, I went, late in the afternoon, to the designated spot, and soon found the rock under which I was to deposite the money. The place was admirably calculated to afford the burglar an opportunity of escaping, should any person lie in

wait to catch him; being swampy, and covered with underwood and briers, through which no person unacquainted with the ground could easily pursue a fugitive familiar with the small but blind avenues made by cattle. It had doubtless been selected on account of these advantages. Having accomplished the object of my errand, I returned to the inn with spirits much less depressed than they had been for many previous weeks, and feeling assured that I had done an act which, in due time, would restore the infant to my arms.

"Early on the following morning I visited the rock again, when I found that the packet had already disappeared. I then returned to Philadelphia, and waited impatiently for the promised intelligence from the robber, holding myself in readiness to depart at a moment's warning. The fortnight within which I was to hear from him, passed without bringing me the communication so anxiously looked for; at the end of which period, it occurred to me that possibly he might have performed his promise, and that notice of the fact might, through accident, have failed to reach me. With feelings of alarm I ordered my carriage, and, although it was late in the day, I set off, and journeyed without stopping till I arrived at the inn. As soon as it was sufficiently light I hurried to the rock, expecting to see my child lying dead in the cavity; and it was not till I had felt in every nook and corner of it, and carefully examined a large tract of ground, that I began once more to breathe freely. I remained there till I had searched nearly the whole area of

the woods and satisfied myself that the boy had not crept away and died.

"A few weeks subsequently, the fellow had the audacity to write me again, declaring that, if I had placed the money under the rock, some other person must have taken it, as he had repeatedly been there and gone away disappointed. He now proposed the sum of two thousand dollars as a ransom; and, to convince me that he had the child, described the shawl, and mentioned the name engraved on the necklace.

"After mature reflection, I concluded to place that amount also in his possession; but he failed to keep his promise, and I never heard from him again. I then despaired of ever recovering my boy, and endeavoured to reconcile myself to a loss which, with the death of my wife, nearly deprived me of reason.

"About ten years ago, some light was thrown upon this nefarious transaction by the confession of a female servant, who lived with me at the period of the robbery, and who, it appeared, was a confederate, and furnished the burglars with all the requisite information. She continued in my service some years; and, although articles were occasionally missed, none ever suspected Jane of having stolen them. At length, however, a great sweep was made. All my plate, with a considerable sum of money, was conveyed away, and circumstances pointing to her as the thief, or an accessary, we charged her with the deed and caused her to be arrested. She was tried, convicted, and sentenced to the state prison for five years.

"In the fourth year of her term she was taken sick, and, just before she died, having sent for me, she confessed her participation in the crime that deprived me of my boy, and said that one of the robbers was a former paramour of hers, named Smith, who, in the event of success, was to share with her whatever he might obtain. It was no part of the plan, she said, to take the infant, and she was horror-stricken on learning what had occurred. Not daring to make any disclosures, lest her own guilt should appear, she preserved a strict silence; though the loss of the child, to which she was much attached, occasioned her the keenest affliction. She professed never to have heard from Smith after that night, and could give no information calculated, at that remote period, to lead to his detection.

"You cannot easily imagine, Mr. Wilmot, what my feelings were, when, after the lapse of nearly twenty years, I received your note, which, though the sex of the child was not alluded to, encouraged me to hope that I might again see a son whom I had long since ceased even to think of as one still among the living."

Charles and his father accepted an invitation to go the same afternoon to Beechwood, where they met the Eldredges.

Mrs. Wilmot, after learning the particulars of Brown's conduct, changed her mind in reference to Charles; and the moment she became informed that he was the only son of Mr. Aubrey, she took him into favour, and treated him with the greatest respect. Clara received him as usual, and at a pri-

vate interview which occurred in the shaded avenue leading to Barnes's, she consented to be his only on condition that he would promise to acquire some skill in horsemanship; so that he might attend her in her equestrian exercises, without the hazard of suddenly making her a widow.

The auctioneer and his lady made it a point to call upon Mr. Aubrey, whom, in their peculiar way, they congratulated upon his good fortune in having discovered, so unexpectedly, a long-lost son. Mrs. Jenks did not fail to inform him that she was very intimate with the Wilmots, and accustomed daily to visit them. "Indeed," said she, "I use as much freedom here as I do in my own house, and dear Mrs. Wilmot looks upon me as a sister. Do you know, sir, that your son was always a favourite of mine? He looks *so* like Edith. People often took them for brother and sister." She gave him a pressing invitation to pass a few days with them, but Mr. Aubrey declined with thanks, alleging that his engagements at home would not permit him that pleasure.

Edith was sad and did not enjoy the visit; while Jasper, after he had offered his congratulations to Vincent, or to Charles Vincent Aubrey (as he now signed his letters, the first of which bearing that signature was addressed to M'Gregor), left Beechwood and went to New-York, where he devoted himself with some assiduity to legal pursuits, suspending them, however, in the seasons of woodcock and English snipe, of which, being a good shot, he managed to bag his share.

Mr. Wilmot received a letter from Tyrrel, enclosing a sum of money to be added to that which he already held belonging to Emma. Tyrrel commended his daughter to that gentleman's oversight, and desired him, if Anderson should marry her, to give him her fortune; otherwise, to invest it in some safe securities, and allow her the income.

One day while Charles and his father were riding on horseback, they passed near the house of Mrs. M'Tavish. Charles, who had been describing the attack to Mr. Aubrey, had the curiosity again to examine the premises. He found the door unfastened, and, on entering one of the rooms, discovered a most horrid spectacle. A man lay dead upon the floor, which was literally covered with the blood that had flowed from a wound in his right temple. By his side lay two pistols, one loaded; and in his bosom, secured by a gold chain, was a miniature likeness of a young female, whose features Vincent instantly recognised as those of Emma Tyrrel. A closer scrutiny of the haggard face before him, disclosed the fact that the suicide was her unhappy father. A note bearing the name John Tyrrel, written in a legible hand, was found on a chair; but no reason was therein assigned for the commission of the deed. A coroner's jury rendered a verdict of voluntary death, and the remains were decently interred in the village churchyard, Mr. Wilmot, Mr. Aubrey and his son, Emma and Anderson, attending the funeral.

Miss Tyrrel accepted an invitation to spend a few days at Beechwood, when Clara, with her usual

goodness, exerted herself to sooth the sorrows of this unfortunate but amiable girl.

Six months from this period Charles and Clara were married. Anderson and Emma were not united till after the lapse of a year from the demise of her father. At Charles' wedding, his friend Gray was introduced to Edith, an acquaintance which soon resulted in matrimony; and it was whispered, at the same time, that Jasper had become an ardent admirer of Miss Eldredge, but our researches have not enabled us to decide whether the twain were ever made one.

Williams was exceedingly proud of his exploits in the attempt to arrest Smith and Jenkins, and frequently entertained his neighbours with an account of them, much to the enhancement of his reputation for courage.

When M'Gregor heard of Charles' marriage, he wrote a long letter to him, recommending, as usual, the constant perusal of the classics, and lamenting that the good people of the United States devoted so little time to the acquisition of the Latin and Greek languages. He advised him, moreover, to let Clara study the grammar of the Roman tongue, and, if possible, read some of the easy authors, that she might understand the derivation of many English words.

Judith did not long live to enjoy the stipend allowed her by Mr. Aubrey. She was found dead in her bed a few months subsequently to the events recorded in the last few pages. In a document

written by herself, and discovered among other papers in her trunk, she confessed her privity to many well-known robberies which she specified, and which were perpetrated by her infamous companions, Tyrrel, Jenkins, and Smith.

Of the last two men, nothing farther was ever heard by the New-York police; but it is believed that a couple of daring fellows, who shortly after robbed the mail between that city and Philadelphia, and whose description, given by the nine courageous passengers, answered to theirs, were no other than those reckless individuals, who, having found themselves in danger, probably shifted their ground, and, by way of keeping their hand in, committed the highway robbery which, at the time, created so great a sensation.

FINIS.